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"WANDERING WILLIE," BY ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR WRITERS, HAS JUST BEGUN.

FRANK LESLIE'S

BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY.

An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction.

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WANDERING WILLIE;
Or,
Lost in the Bush.

The Adventures of a Missionary's Son in the Wilds of Africa.

CHAPTER VI.

SOLD AS A SLAVE.

WHEN Willie went in chase of the wounded bird which had so much excited the sympathy of Birdie Merlin, he left the young girl alone.

He had been gone scarcely five minutes when two fierce-looking Africans sprang from some bushes.

They seized her by the arms and prevented her from uttering any cry by stuffing a gag, made of a piece of wood, in her mouth.

Utterly helpless was she in the hands of those ruffians, who belonged to the much-dreaded Warna tribe of slave-dealers.

She was rapidly dragged along in an opposite direction to that taken by Willie, who consequently saw nothing of her.

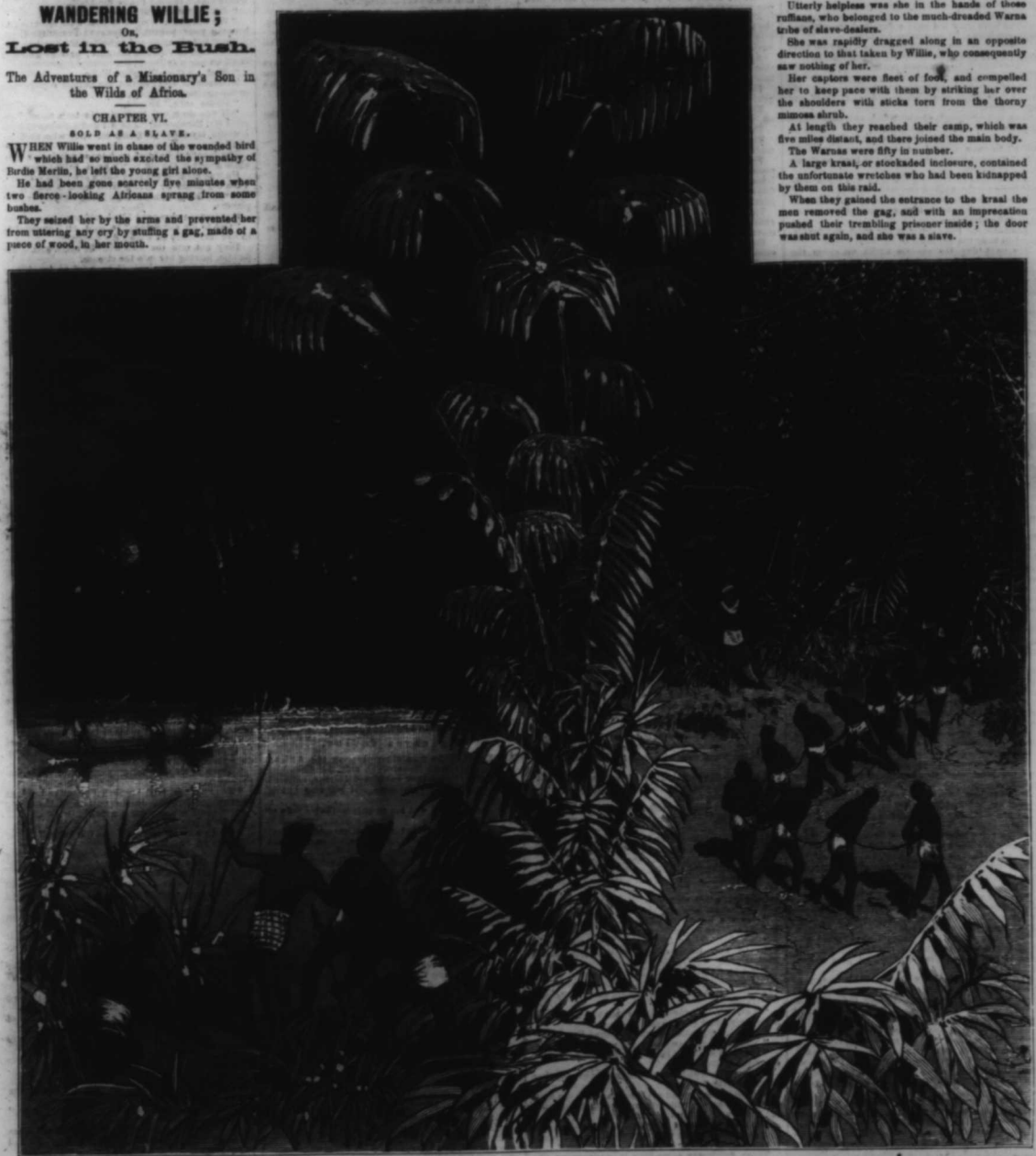
Her captors were fleet of foot, and compelled her to keep pace with them by striking her over the shoulders with sticks torn from the thorny mimosa shrub.

At length they reached their camp, which was five miles distant, and there joined the main body.

The Warnas were fifty in number.

A large kraal, or stockaded inclosure, contained the unfortunate wretches who had been kidnapped by them on this raid.

When they gained the entrance to the kraal the men removed the gag, and with an imprecation pushed their trembling prisoner inside; the door was shut again, and she was a slave.



"SCARCELY HAD THE WORDS ESCAPED HIS LIPS WHEN AN ARROW FLEW OVER HIS HEAD AND DROPPED IN THE WATER. ON THE BANK HALF A DOZEN NATIVES WERE STANDING ARMED WITH SPEARS."

"WHEN THE SLAVES WERE STARTED HE RAN ALONG THE LINE, SLASHING AND CUTTING AT THEM, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, AS IF TO LET THEM KNOW THAT NO LOITERING WOULD BE ALLOWED."

"ORVILLE AND DAN; Or, ADVENTURES IN JAPAN," by COMMODORE AH-LOOK, BEGINS IN OUR NEXT.

The kraal had been hastily constructed, but was substantial and safe.

It was simply a bit of land, thirty by forty feet, inclosed by stakes driven in the ground; these being ten feet high, the top was uncovered.

In this inclosure were fifteen miserable creatures, men and women, huddled together or crouching in corners, naked except a piece of cloth which encircled their loins.

Their bodies were covered with stripes and sores, which showed the brutal nature of the treatment they had been subjected to.

They were perfectly listless and apathetic, looking the personification of despair.

All was blank to them, every vestige of hope having departed.

Birdie's back was bleeding from the prickly nature of the mimosa sticks with which she had been beaten.

Selecting the shady side of the kraal, Birdie sat down to reflect upon her position.

Her fellow-prisoners regarded her with some curiosity, on account of her color, but no one spoke, and they soon relapsed into their former stolidity.

"Oh, Willie!" she sobbed, "this is hard to bear. Why are you not with me?"

The day passed very slowly for Birdie. She had a little pocket-bible which she attempted to read, but her eyes were dimmed with tears, and the lines ran into one another.

A native entered the kraal at sundown and placed on the ground a big earthen pitcher of water and a wooden box, which contained some charred chunks of goat's flesh.

This was for the slaves.

They were only fed once a day, and then treated very much as a farmer treats his pigs.

The miserable beings no sooner saw the food than they rushed to the box, when a struggle ensued.

Those who were strongest got the most, and when Birdie summoned enough resolution enough to go and look for her share, she only found a bone, on which was a little bit of meat, which had been turned bad by the heat.

Sick and disgusted, she let it fall, and waited until she could get a turn at the pitcher.

When all had slaked their thirst at it she was permitted to take a drink, and discovered that the water was not much superior to the food, as it was warm and dirty.

Almost broken-hearted, the poor girl threw herself down on the ground and wept bitterly.

When it grew dark she knelt, her face bowed upon her hands, and prayed fervently for help from on high and consolation.

After this she felt calmer in her mind, and better-fitted to bear the hardship of her lot.

The next day the slavers broke up camp, the prisoners being formed into a sort of chain-gang, one long rope being tied round the waist of each, they being about three feet apart, and standing in Indian file.

A whip composed of successive strips of raw buffalo-hide, knotted together and fastened to a thick, short stick, was wielded by a tall, athletic African.

When the slaves were started he ran along the line, slashing and cutting at them, one after the other, as it to let them know that no loitering would be allowed.

A sharp, stinging pain extracted a cry from Birdie when the whip circled round her, but she crushed back her agony into her heart as she murmured:

"Not my will, but Thine be done!"

All day long the slave-dealers made their captives march under the hot, burning sun.

One poor creature, worn out with fatigue and hunger, dropped in his tracks, being unable to proceed any farther.

The man with the whip flogged him unmercifully, but, seeing that he was really unable to move, he slipped the rope from his waist and left him to die on the sandy plain.

It is almost impossible to describe the horrors of that march.

Badly fed, cruelly treated, suffering the pangs of thirst, poor delicate Birdie often thought of her home at Manasquan, wondering if she would ever see it again.

At night their bed was the ground, and so tired were the slaves that they went to sleep almost as soon as they touched the earth.

During her stay at the lake village of Tipo-Tipo, Birdie had learned a little of the language of the natives, which was also spoken by the Warna tribe.

From remarks made by the slave-dealers at various times, she gathered that they were being taken to Kasonga land, and would be sold to the subjects of King Sankorra.

It was customary to allow the king to have the first choice, and he frequently bought an entire batch of slaves to make a human sacrifice.

Very often he had as many as a hundred men killed to propitiate the evil spirits who were supposed by these ignorant savages to haunt the land.

If fever ravaged the country, the head magician told the king that the bad demons caused the scourge.

Then victims were selected, and blood was poured out like water.

On the third day of the march they had to cross a river.

At the point where the crossing was made there was only a clear channel about six feet wide on each side, the remaining hundred yards of the river's width being covered with a vegetable growth exteading three-quarters of a mile down the stream.

This was a floating island.

Stepping on this was accompanied with much the same sensation as walking on a quaking bog, overgrown with rushes and grass.

On boring with a pole through about three feet of closely-matted vegetation, mixed with soil, the river is found, and the hippopotami pass underneath.

These islands, which are a remarkable feature of African travel, owe their origin to the rushes growing in the bed of the river, impeding the course of floating débris, and causing it to accumulate and form soil for vegetation.

Plants quickly spring up and flourish, and interlacing their roots, a compact mass is the result.

This continues to increase for about six years, when the limit is reached. After that the island, strangely enough, begins to decrease, owing to decay, and disappears altogether in about four years more.

Caravans sometimes pass over them when the stage of decay has already set in, and several have been lost in the attempt.

Consequently there is always great risk in crossing a floating island, and the unhappy slaves were afraid that a disaster might happen to them.

With many curses and much application of the whip they were made to venture on the floating mass.

Birdie's position was eleventh in the gang of fourteen, and trembling on the brink, she saw her wretched companions in misfortune step one after the other on the treacherous island.

One, two, three, four, five, six, made the venture. It would soon come to her turn.

Suddenly the leading slave uttered a cry, threw up his arms and sank slowly.

The other slaves fell back, bearing all their weight on the rope, so as to prevent him from being altogether lost.

Seeing the situation, the chief of the Warna took a leap, landed on the island and ran forward.

Drawing his knife, he cut the rope, and the slave sank.

A convulsive tremor shook his frame, his face was distorted with agony, and a cry of awful terror escaped him.

The chief looked down in the hole made by the slave's body, and saw the dark, ugly head of a hippopotamus, which had snapped the body in half.

He waved the slaves back, and when they reached the bank they went lower down the river and crossed on another place.

Three days more were consumed in traversing the distance remaining between the river and Kasonga.

When the city was reached the slaves were placed in a house, and for the first time well fed.

This was done to make them look more attractive, on the principle that an intending purchaser would be more likely to buy a healthy slave than one worn and emaciated.

After a rest of a week the slaves were taken to the king's palace, which was a collection of about fifty houses, surrounded by a wooden fence, and having large gardens attached.

As Birdie walked through the city she noticed that it was of considerable size, and probably contained ten thousand inhabitants.

The people were handsomely formed and intelligent in appearance.

Their bodies were smeared with red earth and oil, which made them a bright bronze color.

This was the height of fashion in Kasonga.

The market-place was well attended, it being market day.

The women came in from the hamlets in the surrounding country with baskets of flowers, sweet potatoes, yams, fruit of the oil-palm, bananas, tobacco, tomatoes, cucumbers, pottery, large gourds full of pombi and palm-oil.

The men sold fish (both fresh and dried), meat, goats, sugar-canes, nets, baskets, spear and bow-staves and bark-cloth.

Birdie could not help thinking that Africa would soon become a great country if it could be Christianized.

Its productions were numerous and important.

All it wanted was the Bible; then would come railroads, the telegraph and the white man.

King Sankorra had been sick for some time, he having caught a jungle-fever while out hunting giraffes.

He led the chief of the Warna marched the slaves into the palace for his majesty's inspection the latter was lying on a bed of scented grass.

He appeared too weak and languid to rise, and ever and anon his frame was convulsed with a tremor, as if he had a chill.

Benguela, the chief of the magicians, was standing by the king's side, and two slaves were engaged in fanning him.

For some days the king had been sick, and Benguela pretended him that he was bewitched.

Already twenty men had been beheaded, but his majesty grew no better.

When the slaves walked past, the king regarded them with a listless air.

He was a tall, handsome man, with a good-natured face, and would have been a good king if the magicians had not enjoyed so much power over him.

Benguela, on the contrary, was a little fellow, with a sharp, hatchet-like face, a flat nose and thick lips; his eyes were small like those of a pig, but they could gleam with the malignity of a snake.

"Pick out those who will be most acceptable to the spirits," said the king, in a weak voice.

"We will sacrifice ten," replied Benguela.

As the slaves went by he touched ten on the shoulder.

The men, when touched, fell back; some assumed an attitude of sullen despair; others had their countenances illuminated with hope, as if the doom of death had no terror for them.

In fact, those singled out for execution by Benguela were lucky.

His touch liberated them, for when they ascended the scaffold and the sword of the executioner touched them, they were freed from slavery.

Birdie came last.

As the magician's eye fell upon her he seemed to bristle up, his mustache curled with rage, for he hated the white men who sent missionaries over to Africa.

The Christian religion could not exist alongside of paganism, and the instinct of self-preservation taught him this fact.

If Sankorra ever became converted, as his queen had been, then the power of the magicians was gone.

He struck Birdie sharply on the shoulder.

There are ten already," said the king.

"True," replied Benguela; "but this is a white slave."

"Indeed!" cried the king, evincing some interest. "I will give him to the queen. He shall wait upon her."

Benguela's face clouded.

"The Queen Taborah," he said, "is in disgrace."

"Has she not been punished enough by being kept in solitary confinement so long?"

"No, her offense is great. Your majesty is suffering now because she is working charms against you."

The king sighed deeply.

"If she would only give up her new faith!" he exclaimed, "she would be happy, and I, too."

"Happy?"

"Yes, Oh, Benguela, for of all my wives, she is the only one I ever loved."

"Loved," repeated Benguela, scornfully.

"No woman has the charm for me that she has."

"Let us not talk of her. It is bad luck," hastily cried the magician.

He was afraid of Taborah's regaining her old-time influence over the king.

The slave-dealer had sold eleven out of the fourteen slaves he had with him, and taking the remaining three with him, retired satisfied.

Benguela went after him to pay for the slaves.

A curious currency is in vogue in Kasonga land. Everything is priced in beads called "soh."

These beads are something in appearance like small pieces of broken pipe-stems.

A slave came up with a bag full of beads, and a certain number were counted out and given to the slave-dealer.

While Benguela was thus occupied the king raised himself up on his elbow and beckoned to Birdie.

"Do you talk the English?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Birdie.

"Mishenri taught me that tongue. How long have you been away from the land across the sea?"

"I come from America," said Birdie, "and have not been here long."

"Why do your people come to Africa? We do not go to you."

"I came to find the missionary of whom you speak."

"The mishenri?"

"Yes. Does he live?"

"Hush!" replied the king; "Benguela might hear me, and he will not take away the spell that is on me if I speak of the white man."

Birdie smiled contemptuously.

"What can an impostor like that do?" she replied. "You ought to have more sense."

The king looked nervously around, and seeing that Benguela was nowhere about, took heart of grace.

"You ask if he lives?" he said.

"Oh, yes."

"He is alive, but it would be better for him if he were dead."

"What do you mean?"

"He is in the power of Benguela."

"What of that?"

"I dare not say anything more," replied the king, nervously.

"Oh, speak, I conjure you!" cried Birdie. "Tell me where Mr. Hill is."

"I must not. All I can say is that I always thought him a good man. He has worked charms against me, though, and so has my wife, through his influence."

"Do not believe it."

"I do. These Christians are the friends of the spirit of evil."

"No, no!"

"Why, then, am I sick almost unto death?"

"I will cure you," said Birdie, boldly.

"You?"

"Yes, indeed. Trust in me."

"How long will it take you?"

"Three days."

"Good!" said Sankorra. "The magicians shall not kill you within that time."

"And if I make you well?" replied Birdie, her pretty face lighting up with hope once more.

"Then I will consider."

"You will save me, will you not?"

"If I can."

"Oh, yes! You can and will!" said Birdie, earnestly. "You will let me be a slave to your good queen? That is all I ask."

The king made no reply, but Birdie was satisfied with his hesitation.

It showed that he thought something of her, and if she could only become the queen's slave she would have a chance of helping her majesty, and to do that would be to lessen the influence of the magicians.

She had some slight knowledge of medicine, and saw at a glance that the king was suffering from a severe attack of African fever.

In one of her pockets she had some quinine.

These fevers always yield to vigorous treatment, and quinine is the best remedy for them.

It was with this invaluable drug that she intended to treat the king.

The conversation between the king and herself had scarcely ended when Benguela returned after settling with the dealer for the slaves.

He was followed by a file of soldiers belonging to the regular army of the king, which numbered ten thousand men.

To these the magicians consigned the ten men who were destined to be sacrificed.

"Summon the people to the sacrifice," he exclaimed, "and have all ready for the bloodshed an hour before sundown."

Birdie looked significantly at the king.

"Not this one," said Sankorra, pointing out Birdie.

"She," replied Benguela, "shall be spared until to-morrow, when we will give her to the spirit of the boiling spring."

Birdie trembled, and well she might.

This spring spouted boiling water of a temperature of one hundred and ten degrees Fahrenheit, and to be cast into its waters was certain death.

"Leave the slave with me," said Sankorra.

Benguela bowed and went out to make preparations for the sacrifice.

CHAPTER VII.

A STRANGE VOYAGE.

WE left Willie wandering through the African wilds with Monamunza and the Reverend Barebones, going they knew not whither, exposed to the terrible tropical heat, and suffering untold privations.

Praise-the-Lord was the most remarkable man of the party.

Neither hunger, thirst, nor heat seemed to affect his spirits, for he was always cheerful, as becomes a tried and faithful soldier of the cross.

They marched all night, determining to rest by day, so as to avoid the heat which threatened to prostrate Willie.

The latter was not so inured to the African climate as his companions.

Toward morning their progress was checked by a river.

Its rapid and broad stream prevented the possibility of swimming across.

Tied to a tree which grew on the bank was a large dugout, which was probably used by a native of some neighboring village to fish in.

"Let us get in the boat," cried Willie, "and float with the stream. It will be much more pleasant than walking."

At this proposition Monamunza looked horrified.

"No goes on that river," he said.

"Why not?"

"It leades to Matama land."

Willie laughed.

"I'm as wise now as I was before," he remarked.

"Look the wayee streames flows."

"Well?"

"It not go to the sea likee other river. It flow into Matama land."

Willie looked at the stream and saw that it did, as the black said, flow inland.

This was very remarkable, as most rivers flow into the sea, but the watershed of Central Africa is of a peculiar nature.

Perhaps it emptied itself into some vast inland lake, which again found an outlet in another direction.

It certainly had its rise near a chain of mountains, which was dimly visible in the misty distance.

"What is this Matama land?" asked Willie.

"It means death," replied Mona.

"Not exactly," said Praise-the-Lord.

"What then?"

"I have heard the natives talk of this mysterious region, and they tell very curious stories about it."

"Indeed?"

"Matama really means the land of the lost."

"What a romantic name, and at the same time what a terribly suggestive one!"

"It simply means that people who have visited that land never come back again."

Monamunza nodded his head violently.

"That it!" he exclaimed. "My brother he takee bostee, and never see him any more."

"He may be detained in slavery," Willie suggested.

"No; kingee killee all."

"There is another peculiar story about this country," said Mr. Barebones.

"What's that?"

"The people say that the Matamas, who are a powerful, warlike and numerous tribe, in spite of their objection to strangers, are ruled over by a white man."

"Then he would not hurt us," said Willie. "Let us go to Matama land."

"I would as soon preach the Word there as anywhere else," replied Praise-the-Lord.

"But my father will be neglected."

"We will not lose sight of your filial intention to succour your parent," answered Praise-the-Lord. "But it is so long since I exhorted the heathen that I would like to visit this Matama; besides which, it is all on our way."

"Well, I will go," replied Willie.

Monamunza still evinced the utmost repugnance to the proposed journey.

"All die, sure," he said.

"If you do it will be in the Master's cause," replied Mr. Barebones, "and if I had a thousand lives I would lay them all down for Him who died for me."

The fanatical light of an intense religious enthusiasm shone in the old man's keen, bright eyes.

He was made of the stuff which produces martyrs.

No cry could be wrung from such a man if his flesh was being torn from his living body by red-hot pincers.

Monamunza shrugged his shoulders.

"Got to die some day," he said. "Not muchee to live for. May as wellee die young."

They got into the boat and the black seized the paddle, forcing her into the stream.

Willie, who was, like all boys, of an inquisitive disposition, explored a locker at the stern of the boat.

To his surprise he found some dried fish, pounded corn, and a gourd full of palm-wine.

This refreshed them, and they continued their journey with better spirits.

As they progressed the river became narrower and its channel passed between high rocks, which formed a frowning wall on either side.

When it grew dark they looked about for some place to land, but were unable to find any, owing to the precipitious rocks.

Consequently, they were compelled to keep on with the current.

Monamunza managed the boat very expertly, and kept her well in the stream; but it was a relief to all when the moon rose, as there was danger of being dashed against the rocky walls and drowned.

The night passed without any accident.

When day dawned, bright and golden in the east, the rocks disappeared, and they saw on each side of them a beautiful undulating country.

Part was covered with corn, and on rich pastures cattle, goats and sheep were grazing.

"This is Matama land!" exclaimed Monamunza.

Scarcely had the words escaped his lips when an arrow flew over his head and dropped in the water.

On the bank half a dozen natives were standing, armed with spears and bows.

They made signs to the people in the boat to bring her into the shore.

"The Philistines are upon us," exclaimed Praise-the-Lord Barebones.

"What shall we do, sir?" asked Willie.

Barebones stood up in the boat, his tall, gaunt, figure towering like a pine-tree.

"If we refuse to obey their implied commands," he replied, "they will pierce us with arrows, and if we land, they may put us to the sword. We are in a dilemma. I will try and find guidance in prayer."

A second arrow flew over the boat, and as before it fell harmlessly in the river.

It did not seem to be the wish of the Matamas at present to kill the occupants of the dugout.

Their intention was rather to frighten them, and by showing how easily they could reach them to induce them to surrender themselves.

"There is no time for praying," said Willie, impatiently.

"Your pardon, boy," replied Praise-the-Lord, as he sank on his knees in the bottom of the boat; "there is always time for prayer."

Willie bowed his head.

"That's so," he said; "I was too hasty."

Presently, Barebones arose.

"Paddle her in, Mona," he exclaimed. "We shall be none the worse for the little stop I made. Take an old man's word for that."

The black struck the water with the paddle, and under his dexterous guidance the boat shot toward the shore.

No further attack was made by the natives, who waited patiently for the boat to arrive.

When the bow struck the shore, they seized it and drew it up, making signs for the occupants to throw down any arms they had.

Seeing they were in a strange country, that they were outnumbered, and that nothing was to be gained by resistance, they at once complied.

Mona threw down his spear, and Willie handed the head man his pistol and knife.

The chief put the knife in his belt, but the use of the pistol he did not seem to comprehend.

He handled it in every way, and at last put it in his mouth, as if he thought the polished barrel might be something to eat.

"Don't do that, man," cried Willie, in alarm.

Monamunza laughed.

"He'll findee that difficult to eatee," said the black. "That not gotee hard kernel."

"Speak to him and tell him it is dangerous," continued Willie.

Mona said something in his language, but before he could make himself understood, the chief had pulled the trigger.

The result may be easily imagined.

Owing to the barrel being in his mouth, the bullet,

when the pistol was discharged, entered his brain, and he fell to the ground a corpse.

The other natives were intensely surprised.

They turned him over, examined the wound in the head, from which the blood was flowing, and expressed their astonishment in ejaculations.

The pistol they were afraid to touch, because they thought it was bewitched.

Being satisfied that their friend and leader was dead, they turned their attention to Willie and Mr. Barebones and Monamunza.

Seizing their right arms they bound them one to the other with a rope made of reeds, which was so thin and sharp that it cut into the flesh.

This done, they pushed their captives before them, making them walk a distance of six miles.

The walk brought them to a spacious building, which had more pretension than any other African residence Willie had yet seen.

Other houses could be seen in the distance, but this particular one was evidently the residence of some distinguished person.

Willie was much impressed with its appearance of neatness and good order.

A door swung open, and they found themselves in a well-kept courtyard.

In this there were a large storehouse and two small dwellings, while a palisade in front divided them from the principal house, which was flanked on one side by a magnificent grove of orange trees covered with fruit.

Willie was suffering acutely from thirst, and the sight of an orange, perfectly ripe, growing within his reach, was a temptation he could not resist.

He stretched out his left hand to pluck the luscious fruit.

His fingers had actually touched an orange, when Praise-the-Lord, who saw his action, pushed against him.

"Hast thou forgotten the Eighth Commandment?" he asked.

Willie flushed and looked penitent.

"I didn't think there would be any harm," he replied.

"There is always harm in breaking the Divine law," said Mr. Barebones.

The captives were halted in the courtyard while one of the natives communicated with a man who was armed with a spear, and acted the part of guard or sentry.

Presently a man came out armed with a sharp wooden sword.

The three captives were forced on their knees.

Willie thought his last hour had come, and so did Mr. Barebones.

"It's all over with us," said Willie.

"Yes," replied Praise-the-Lord; "we shall soon be gathered into the fold. Let us die singing a song of praise."

He commenced to sing a hymn, and appeared perfectly indifferent to the near prospect of death.

Monamunza bore himself bravely, and exhibited the stolidity of an Oriental.

Indeed, it would be strange if an African shuddered at the approach of death, because he sees from his youth up cruelty and murder on all sides of him.

An African actually lives in the shadow of death.

"Bad country," he murmured; "wrong to come to Matama landee."

The men who had captured the travelers spoke excitedly to the person who was armed with the sword.

From their pantomimic action they were evidently detailing the—to them—extraordinary death of their leader.

When their story was told, the swordsman, who, in fact, was the executioner, approached the captives.

All were singing the hymn which Mr. Barebones had struck up.

The sword was raised in the air, it described a circle, and Monamunza's head fell from his shoulders, as cleanly as if it had been severed by the sharp knife of the guillotine.

The head rolled one way and the trunk another.

So suddenly and skillfully was the dreadful deed accomplished that the black did not utter a cry.

Willie shuddered with horror as the hot blood spurted over him.

It was hard to die so young.

If he had seen his father and accomplished his self-imposed task, if he had bidden adieu to Birdie, the world—it would have been so great.

As it was, he did not wish to die.

The executioner raised his sword again, and it circled over the head of the aged missionary.

Praise-the-Lord Barebones ceased singing.

He saw the fatal weapon in the air, and he knew that his end was approaching.

"Forgive them!" he exclaimed, "they know not what they do. Lord, receive my spirit!"

He had barely time to speak these words when the sword swooped down upon his neck, and his head rolled off as Monamunza's had done.

Willie was the third in the row, and consequently the last to come under the executioner's notice.

An indescribable feeling came over him.

It was a sort of fury or madness which he could not account for.

He determined not to die without a struggle for freedom.

With a desperate jerk he snapped the cord which bound him to his dead companions, and with their hot blood still steaming on his clothes he sprang to his feet.

With a strength that in him was almost superhuman he attacked the Matama.

Grasping the sword near the handle, a struggle ensued for its possession.

The result could not long have been doubtful, because Willie was so small and insignificant in the hands of a man with the strength of the executioner.

But it luckily happened that the latter slipped in a pool of gore, and fell on his back.

This was Willie's opportunity.

He wrenched the sword from him and stood over him threateningly.

"I could kill you if I wanted," he exclaimed.

"But I have been taught to return good for evil, and treat well those who despitefully use me."

The executioner expected death every moment, and said nothing.

Willie was surprised at his own victory, and knew not what to do.

The remaining natives looked on passively.

At this juncture a man of small stature, having a white skin, and being dressed in a flowing robe of white muslin, confined at the waist by a leathern belt, appeared on the scene.

"Stop!" he exclaimed, in English.

Willie lowered his sword.

"What country are you from?" continued the new-comer.

"The land of the Stars and Stripes!"

"America?"

"Yes, sir," answered Willie.

The man held out his hand in a friendly way.

"Shake hands," he exclaimed. "I am sorry this has happened, but your life is safe."

"Safe?"

"Yes, my boy. I am glad I came out when I did."

"Who are you, sir, may I ask?"

"Urinza, King of Matama," was the reply.

Willie was almost paralyzed with astonishment at hearing this announcement, and at finding the king was a white man.

Events had succeeded one another so rapidly that he was bewildered, and he felt sick and dizzy.

The bodies of his late companions were not yet cold, and he had been saved only by a miracle.

Seeing the excited condition the boy was in, the king took him by the arm and led him into the house.

He was conducted into a sitting-room, the floor of which was planked, the windows had green jalousies, the ceiling was of white cloth, and the mud-plastered walls were painted blue.

In the centre stood a table, which groaned under the weight of cooked meats, fowls and rice, while the repast was flanked with earthen jars of wine.

"Sit down and regale yourself," exclaimed the king.

"I cannot eat," replied Willie.

The king poured some wine into a cup and made him drink it.

"That will fix you," he said.

In a short time Willie recovered himself, and though his mind was still full of the awful deaths of his companions, he bestowed some attention on himself.

"What part of the States are you from?" he demanded.

"Jersey," replied Willie.

"And I come from Trenton. Tell me all about yourself, and then you shall hear my history."

Willie gladly related all that had happened to him, and felt that he had found a friend in the king.

"If your father is alive we will endeavor to rescue him for you from the clutches of King Sankorra," said King Urinza. "I have heard of the Reverend Mr. Hill as one of the best missionaries that ever struck this coast."

"I have not much hope, sir," said Willie.

"Why not?"

"King Sankorra is said to be so cruel, and all Kasonga land is plunged in heathenish darkness."

"So are all the tribes."

"How is it that you cannot Christianize the Matamas?" asked Willie.

The king looked grave.

"The fact is, I never tried," he answered.

"Never tried?" repeated Willie, sadly. "Oh, what a golden opportunity you have lost!"

"Perhaps."

"How long have you been here?"

"About five years. I came with a commercial expedition and succeeded the post of doctor. Our caravan was attacked by a marauding party of the Matamas. All our party were killed but myself. I was brought here. The small-pox was raging terribly at the time. I had my medicine-chest. I got some credit, and I stamped out the fatal scourge, and though I could not save the king's life, I preserved the queen, who did me the honor to marry me."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, my boy. That is how I came to sit on the throne."

"Do you like it?"

"Not much. I want to go home; for, after all, I am only the pet slave of the queen. I have very little real power, but she will not let me go."

"How are you from?"

"I presume so, or else she would not watch me so closely. I expect I shall get into trouble for saving you, as she ordered all captives to be killed."

"You should assert your rights," said Willie.

"Queen Jumah, my dear boy, is a strong-minded woman, and she enforces her arguments with a broomstick," replied the king, ingubriously.

Willie could not help laughing.

"It's no joke," added the king. "See how bald I am. The first thing she does for is my hair. Ah! I wish I was plain Uriah Windsor, back again in Trenton, New Jersey."

"Is that your name?"

"Yes, Uriah Windsor. U. Windsor. Don't you see, they have made it Urinza; Africanized it. And here I am, a king in name, and that's all."

There was a rustling of skirts at the door of the room, and a tall, well-formed woman, wearing a spacious calico dress, entered.

She was young, very angry, and her dusky face had an unamiable expression.

In her hand she held a broom, and running up to the king, endeavored to hit him with it.

Urinza dodged under the table and skipped around it, but the woman tried to elude her.

At length the woman got him into a corner, and seizing him by the hair, beat him till she was tired.

"Me already told you," she said, "that you must not interfere with me."

"I'll never do it again," replied the miserable king.

Bang! whack! bang!

Urinza caught hold of the broomstick.

"Let up, Jumah!" he cried. "Do you want to kill me?"

"Me queen."

"Yes, I know it."

"You nothing."

"Very true. I am only a lodger. I admit it."

"Why you save this one boy life?" she continued.

"Because he is an American, and comes from near the same place I do," answered Urinza, rubbing his back.

Jumah looked at Willie, and his innocent, handsome, engaging face made a favorable impression on her.

"Come here!" she said.

He approached her, and she patted his head.

Then she stooped over and kissed him.

"No!" cried the king, "stop that!"

"What for I stop?"

"Do you want to make me jealous?"

The queen raised the broomstick threateningly, and the king at once subsided into a chair.

"That'll do; I've had enough," he said.

He solaced himself with some roast meat and a deep draught of wine.

Meanwhile, the queen asked Willie a variety of questions, and he told her that he had come to Africa after his father, who, for preaching the glad tidings to King Sankorra, had been either killed or imprisoned in Kasonga land.

"What are those glad tidings?" asked Queen Jumah.

In answer to this question Willie began to tell her all about the Bible, and the redemption of mankind by the sacrifice of the cross.

The queen was as much interested as astonished. Addressing her husband, she exclaimed:

"Why did you not tell me all this?"

"I—I didn't think of it," he stammered.

She seized the broomstick angrily, as if she was going to punish him for his remissness.

Changing her mind, she said to Willie:

"He send to King Sankorra."

"What for?" he queried.

"Tell him to give up your father."

"Suppose he will not?"

"Then," replied the amazon, "I taking ten thousand warriors and I bring him away."

"You will make war?"

"Yes. Matama best Kasonga."

Willie's heart beat wildly at this declaration, and he felt that fate was drawing him nearer to his father.

That day a messenger was dispatched from Queen Jumah to King Sankorra.

He was the bearer of an ultimatum.

If Sankorra did not give up the Reverend Mr. Hill, Kasonga land would be invaded by the Matamas.

In the interim Willie was treated kindly. He was allowed to bury Praise-the-Lord and Monamunza, and the queen frequently talked with him on the subject of religion.

Had it not been for the loss of Birdie Merlin and his uncertainty as to her fate, Willie would have been happy.

(To be continued.)

"Wandering Willie" was commenced in No. 654.

A VALUABLE PET.

QUITE recently, a large, white bull, belonging to Mr. Patterson, on his farm near Peabody, Kansas, in some way got loose from the stall in which it was tied, and the men of the family being far from the house in the field, Mrs. Patterson attempted to catch the animal by approaching it with a basin of salt. This seemed to work well at first, as the animal, on being called, came near and bowed its head as about to lick the salt. At this instant Mrs. Patterson attempted to catch the animal by the ring in its nose, and to her surprise the beast plunged at her and threw her into the air ten feet.

When she fell to the ground the beast made another rush at her, but her pet dog, seeming to take in the perilous situation of its mistress, caught the bull by the ring in the nose, and held it until assistance arrived, and the animal was captured. Mrs. Patterson, though badly bruised, is doing well. Mrs. Patterson also states that this little dog saved the life of her husband in a similar manner some time since.

A REMARKABLE VOYAGE.

A MOST remarkable voyage was that which a five-year-old boy of Iowa City made the other day. He was playing just above the dam, and near a pool from which the water is drawn into an underground flume to the wheel of a paper-mill, a distance of one hundred feet, and fell into the pool. Immediate search was made for him by his parents and others, but no trace of him could be found. A short time afterward, one of the paper-mill hands happened to be down near the water-wheel of the mill, and heard a childish voice hailing him from the dark recesses of the wheel. A lantern was procured and search made within the wheel recess, and there the little five-year-old hero was found clinging to the wheel-post in the water up to his waist.

He had fallen into the pool and been drawn into the underground flume, and made the 100-foot passage through it and landed on the paper-mill wheel in good order and uninjured.

A WOMAN'S NERVE.

A YOUNG lady in Oil City, Pa., recently showed herself to be possessed of a degree of nerve and presence of mind that few women can boast of. She was crossing a railroad track, when the heel of one of her boots got caught and firmly wedged into the apex of a frog, which held her foot as in a vise. A train was approaching, and there was no one near. It was a terrible moment of suspense, for the engineer could not possibly stop the train in time to prevent her from being dashed to pieces; but she fortunately had presence of mind enough to stoop down, tear the lacings of the boot apart, and withdraw her foot just in time, for the next instant the train dashed by, crushing the boot to a shapeless mass.

THE BIG MEDICINE OF THE SIOUX.

By W. O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER I.

THIS earth of ours has many a wild and curious patch of ground upon it between its polar desolation and its tropic luxuriance of vegetable and animal life. It has its cities, dead and living, its battlefields and its other great cemeteries, but in all the twenty-four hours of any day it does not hold up for the sun to shine upon a more remarkable stretch of country, all things considered, than that which lies between the muddy waters of the North Platte, on the south, and what men have chosen to call the Black Hills on the north, including the "bad lands" of Dacotah, and the broken ranges of height and valley which the Crows proper, and the Sioux have tried to sell, and which the turkey-buzzards, the coyotes and the prairie-dogs really own.

It is a queer country, and will soon be described in as many more different ways as it has been heretofore, but no one thing among its mournful solitudes was half so well worth human attention as was either of three several parties of human beings who were working their way across it under the bright sun of one October morning, not so very long ago.

"One at a time?"

The better way, beyond all doubt, for they were separated by miles and miles of broken country, and neither one knew where to find the other.

By the side of a bright, clear spring of water, that started off on a "run" down-hill to the eastward, no man knew whither, a group of three were listlessly watching a dull-looking half-breed Indian, as he lazily harnessed the treble spans of mules to a couple of light but strongly-constructed Plains wagons.

Three of them, and all white; and what was more remarkable, all of them, the two gentlemen and the lady, bearing unmistakable traces of having recently come from the very upper circles of that civilization of which the Bad Lands are the earthly antipodes.

The lady, albeit the dark and quiet beauty of her sweet young face had a good deal of steady resolution in it, bore, just now, a species of resigned and worn expression, as if she were enduring that for which she rather hoped than expected—a comfortable ending.

Her two male companions, on the other hand, were evidently ill at ease, like men who feel themselves hovering on the edge of a somewhat perilous debate.

"You would not leave us now, Harry Poole," said one—"now that we must be so near our journey's end?"

"Near the end, Sam Garrett?" half angrily returned the other. "Who ever talked of leaving you? I only hope the old man *has* followed us, as you believe. If he has, we had better turn toward the settlements again, and leave him to hunt for our trail among these sage-brushes and dog-holes. He might as well hunt for a needle in a haystack. Upon my soul, I don't see what you are running away for. If you've stolen your guardian's daughter didn't he steal your money——"

"Harry Poole!" It was the voice of the lady now; "you forget that you are speaking of my father."

"Indeed I don't," replied the undaunted Harry. "I've been your friend since we were babies together, and I've stuck by Sam through West Point and on the Plains, and through many and many a day of hard service in camp and field. But I do say that, for a wedding-trip, we've gone about as far into the rural districts as any sane white man ever dreamed of going. I don't mind my own scalp so much, but I wonder either of you has anything of the kind to boast of this blessed day. If you don't want to go to the expense of a wig before your time you'd better join me in urging Sam to strike for Fort Laramie, without another day of this crazy prospecting for he don't know what."

"You forget, Harry," said Sam, "that you and I have been over a good deal of this country before, and it may be I do know what I am after."

"Maybe you do," growled Harry. "And I'm ready to back you for anything in reason; but I wish I knew better than I do where we are bound for this day, and whether my hair would be in order when we go into camp again. We're close to the foot of the Black Hills now. Hallo—what's that? Mount, Sam! No, there isn't time to mount; they're charging right in on us! Close work, this! There, tally one for me! Antone, look out for the mules! Lottie, get under the wagon!"

Both Harry Poole and Sam Garrett had seen service on the Plains before, or the intended "surprise party" of that half dozen of Sioux warriors would have been altogether too complete a success. As it was, they quickly learned, to their cost, that they had made a very disastrous blunder and three of them wheeled away as swiftly as they had come, leaving the other three where the deadly bullets of the two white men had pitched them.

No harm had come to the little "wedding-party," if such it was, although Lottie had not gone "under the wagon," and had a Sioux bullet actually sticking in the loose folds of her dress to bear witness to Sam's anxious eyes how near and how real had been the peril into which he had somehow brought her.

"I give it up, Harry!" was Sam's reply. "Now the redskins are actually on our trail, there's no use in discussing the matter. I've been an obstinate, wrong-headed, dreamy fool; but that arrow has opened my eyes. I only hope those fellows won't be back again, with half their tribe at their heels!"

"Not likely," dryly returned Harry; the only wonder is, in my mind, how they happened to be here, in their war-paint, at this time of the year, so far away from their hunting grounds. There's some devilry a-going that we've not posted up on."

"Sam! Harry! There they come again—a great many of them!" just then almost screamed poor Lottie. "Oh, what shall we do? I had rather meet my father!"

"I should say so," coolly returned Harry; but Sam added:

"Look there, now; I don't understand that. I'll swear our first lot were Sioux, but those other fellows are after them, hot-footed!"

"Crows, then," said Harry. "That solves the whole riddle; only I'd as soon be scalped by one as another, and there's a round hundred in that gang!"

"It's hardly the thing to strike the weaker party," replied Sam, as he raised his rifle; "but here's another crack at the Sioux!"

"Wise, if not liberal," said Harry; and he, also, sent a leaden messenger after their recent assailants, as they galloped past.

Only one went down, but the deed had had plenty of witnesses, and was greeted with tumultuous yells of savage approbation from the clouted and painted swarm of pursuers, a few of whom pressed on after their remaining victims, while the remainder drew rein around the "wedding party."

Another like hostile demonstration on the part of the two white men would have been utter madness, even if the gestures and utterances of the Crows—for such they really were—had seemed to call for resistance.

Sam and Harry, therefore, with Lottie between them, stood heroically still, while the new-comers were approaching, and poor Antone, for reasons best known to himself, disappeared somewhere in the interior of the nearest tilted wagon.

The etiquette of the Plains is as rigid as that of any court in Europe, and the maze of the Crow warriors halted, as a matter of course, at two or three rods of "respectful distance," while their head chief, a tall and splendidly ugly redskin, followed by a trio of lesser dignitaries, sprang from his horse and strode forward to closer quarters, extending his hand as he did so, with the Plains "sign-language" token of amity.

He was answered in due form by Sam Garrett, but the chief himself must have been astonished to find a white man, dressed in such a thoroughgoing "settlements" rig of "store clothes," addressing him in his own tongue.

Not a visible sign of such an emotion, or of any other, however, was to be discovered on the cloudy bronze of the warrior's face as he listened and responded.

"Glad to meet great Crow chief," Sam had said. "Friends come just in time. Maybe more Sioux around. Only two of us, and we couldn't kill them all."

"White men fight Sioux. Must be friends of Crow chief. Red Arrow glad to meet them. Glad to see squaw. Must be great braves, else never come out here." was the very logical rejoinder of the dusky leader.

Sam Garrett and his friend, however, knew too much of Indian character to do any great amount of talking or to explain too minutely the circumstances of their singular trip into the wilderness. A more practical and politic operation was that of

A VALUABLE PET.—MRS. PATTERSON'S LITTLE DOG SAVES HER FROM BEING GORED BY A BULL.—SEE PAGE 211.

stepping to the wagon and bringing out a handsomely-mounted rifle, as a present to Red Arrow and a token of the satisfaction of the two pale-faces at meeting their friends and being delivered from their enemies.

"It was magnificent good luck for us," growled Harry Poole, as he climbed into the wagon, "that the Crows didn't turn up first. I'd have shot the wrong redskin, as sure as I'm alive."

One other thing Harry discovered, as he handed the presentation-rifle out to Sam, for Antone, flat on the bottom and covered with miscellaneous goods and properties, grabbed him by the leg, exclaiming:

"You not 'calp yit? Is de colonel dead? Bery queer ting!"

"Get up, you fool!" snapped Harry. "These are Crows, and Sam Garrett knows their lingo. I ain't half sure he didn't meet 'em by appointment, and if he don't mean to settle among 'em. Get up, and come out of that."

"Crow?" soberly returned Antone. "Den I come out. Reckon dey forgit all about Antone."

And so saying, the somewhat stupid-looking half-breed slowly followed his cynical employer.

No sooner, however, did the luckless "sneak," as he surely had been, show himself in the open air than the swarm of daring raiders around him, instantly comprehending the situation, greeted him with such a chorus of mocking jeers as testified abundantly to the keen sense of the grotesque and the ludicrous possessed by the red men of the Plains.

"Half-and-half!" exclaimed one.

"White man fight, Crow fight, even Sioux fight—half-man hide in the wagon!" shouted another.

"Take his scalp off!"

"Take his head off!"

"Kill half of him!"

"Kill the other half!"

Lottie could not, of course, comprehend the meaning of the tempest of rude and guttural wit that greeted the cowardly teamster, but the smile which showed that she understood its drift was accepted by the Crow bystanders most graciously, as a token of the remarkable confidence in them entertained by their new pale-face acquaintances.

White men who killed their enemies for them, and a white squaw who could appreciate their fun, were likely to get a strong hold on the goodwill of the wild gentlemen of the Dacotah Hills, and Harry Poole remarked to himself that there "was less of a half-lifted sort of feeling about the roots of his hair than there had been."

As for the luckless Antone, he pretended to be wonderfully busy about the harness of his team, quite contented to be laughed at, so long as the arrows and lances remained inactive. A jeer was evidently a better thing, in his opinion, than a scalp-yell, at any time of day, and especially just then and there.

CHAPTER II.

SO much for the first scene in this drama of the wilderness, and the second was by no means a great many miles away. Beyond all doubt, moreover, number two was following on the trail of number one, in spite of Harry Poole's sneer at the impossibility of such a thing. It may be that even his icy nerves would have experienced something of a sensation if he could have observed precisely the manner in which that trailing had evidently been done.

There were three in this party also, but only one of them was a human being, the other two being a pair of remarkably strongly-built and efficient-looking thoroughbreds. One of the latter was at present doing duty as a pack-horse, and the other bore upon his back a being who would have challenged attention wherever or by whomever he might have been met.

In too thickest crowd on earth or in the loneliest desert, that weird, bitter-faced, withered old man would have been worth while to turn for a second look at him.

From under bushy and projecting eyebrows of yellowish-white, a pair of deep, greenish-gray, fiery eyes looked out over a prominent "hawk's nose" to light up the innumerable seams and wrinkles which crossed each other in all directions until they were concealed, so far as the lower part of his face was concerned, by the tangled luxuriance of his grizzly beard, while his scanty white hair fluttered out on the prairie breeze from under a close-fitting cap of what looked like sealskin.

A very remarkable-looking old man, indeed, to be forcing his way at so fast and so steady a pace across that desolate wilderness, all alone by himself.

As for the wilderness and the desolation, however, he seemed to mind neither the one nor the other, peopled as they well might be with perils of every sort and nature, but bent his keen eyes straight before him, now at the trail and now at the far horizon, as if he half expected that those who had made the former might shortly appear between him and the latter.

"Been made within six-hours, I should judge," he muttered, in a hoarse, deep voice, and with the monotone of one who is accustomed to talk to himself. "The young fools must have had something more than fear of me to send them out on this awful journey. Sam is a strange fellow, but Harry Poole is a man of sense, and I wonder he didn't prevent it. It isn't possible either of them knew; and yet for what other reason could they have taken this direction? At all events, I am likely to know before noon, unless I fall in with the wrong party first."

Even as he spoke it became evident that he had fallen in with some party or other, but whether the right one or the wrong, nothing in his own conduct or appearance gave the slightest indication. For most white explorers in that debatable ground it would certainly have been altogether the most unpleasant of all possible company, but the grim old man turned neither to the right hand nor the left as warrior after warrior rode out from the seeming solitude around him and urged his fleet steed nearer and nearer, with at first loud yells of what seemed strangely like greeting and recognition.

Closer and closer wheeled and charged and shouted the painted Sioux riders, till more than a score of them were accompanying the steadfast and voiceless progress of the incomprehensible stranger.

Assuredly, there was nothing which could be called hostile in the demonstrations of the red men, and after a little while the shouts died away into silence, and, with meaning nods and becks and gestures, they even disappeared as they had come, leaving the hard-faced old man to his own devices.

"Three times that has happened since yesterday morning," he growled through his grizzly mustache. "I wonder if it will continue to hold good. There is something more in it than I can understand—and yet I know them well."

It was, indeed, a curious kind of a puzzle, nor would it have been altogether explained if he or another could have heard and interpreted the meaning of the remarks which passed from brave to brave as they rode away.

"The Medicine-eye is angry."

"He is riding for the Manitou."

"We ought not to have spoken."

"How should we know?"

"He will be with the chiefs at the council to-morrow."

"Then he will tell us."

"It is bad medicine for the Sioux when he is silent."

"We have lost some scalps to-day, or we shall lose some."

And so the painted warriors grew graver and more silent as they galloped on, mile after mile in a direction nearly at right angles to that which the old man had taken.

For nearly an hour after he had been left to himself the latter pushed steadily forward, without meeting a living thing bigger than a coyote, until he came to a spot where a few trees and a spring of water seemed to have provided a resting-place for way-farers like himself.

Springing from his unwearied quadruped with an agility which belied his white hairs, the traveler gave such careful attention to both his equine servants as showed a practical appreciation of their needs as well as their value.

"My scalp may depend on their legs before night," he soliloquized; "and old Simon Maynard has ridden across prairie too often to neglect the only protection he has brought with him. I only hope Lottie and her two fools are as well off for horseflesh as I am. They must be, or I'd have caught up with 'em long ago."

Somewhat in error as he was in this, the veteran's next movement showed that he had not forgotten himself in his preparations for his "forced march." Wonderfully concise and condensed as was the load on the spare horse, it nevertheless contained quite enough to furnish forth many a comfortable meal.

No time was wasted making a fire, to be sure, but an alcohol lamp was quite enough to prepare a cup or two of black coffee, and sundry strange preparations of fish, or flesh, or fowl were duly expanded, with a little water and a little heat, to an ample volume and a very appetizing smell and appearance.

The armies of the future will laugh at the huge commissary-trains of the present and the past, and kingdoms by the dozens have been thrown away for lack of the science which went to the simple provision of that grim graybeard's breakfast. When all that is eatable of an ox can be stowed in three haversacks, there is no need for a whole regiment to be disabled till the animal himself can be driven into camp.

The breakfast was a good one, no doubt, and the horses were permitted to pick a while on the scanty herbage by the spring, while their master was preparing for them something akin to that on which he had regaled himself; but, at last, all that prudence and experience could dictate had been properly attended to, and the white head once more was lifted to its former high place and the fiery eyes again looked steadily forward on the trail of the wagon-wheels and the hoofs, as it led away from the spring toward the darkening ranges of the mountains to the northward.

"Simon Maynard," he said to himself, as he rode forward, "you will catch them before night, and what will you do then? You are not the same man you were when you started. Is there any witchcraft in the air of these Plains to make you grow young and soft-hearted again? You were both when you last rode over them. Don't be a fool, Simon."

Little enough of youth or softness could any observer have discerned in the face from which the muttered monotone proceeded, but it may have been that there was somewhat less of burning intensity in the old man's eyes. Could it have been because he had eaten so good a breakfast and with so very remarkable an appetite, for a man of his age?

Perhaps so.

At all events, he seemed to have lost no part of his purpose of following that trail, whatever doubt he might have as to what he would do when he should find the other end of it, and the gallant beast under him pushed onward with a steady and unfaltering stride, which paid small attention to the occasional roughness of the way.

And with every mile of progress the distant mountain-ranges seemed to loom up darker and taller against the unclouded sky, save where some prouder peak than the rest bore upon its summit the tokens of the perpetual Winter which reigned there.

"The mountains will bring them to bay," muttered Simon Maynard; "but I think shall I reach them before they reach the mountains. I only hope the Sioux may not get hold of them first, or that, if they do, they will deal as respectfully with Lottie and her husband, not to mention that scapegrace of a Harry Poole, as they seem disposed to deal with me."

The softening process was evidently doing very well, but now it became once more apparent that the seeming solitudes were peopled. Away to the right and left wild horsemen began to show themselves over the dull rolls of the plain. No whooping, no yelling, but more and more near they were riding, watching closely as they did so the steady career of the gray-headed old man, as if he were some puzzle far beyond them.

CHAPTER III.

LITTLE more than one half an hour's gallop to the westward of the spring and grove at which Simon Maynard had halted for his late breakfast, a group had gathered that was in many ways as noteworthy as either of the others, and it, too, consisted at first of but three persons, leaving out of the account, this time, the quadruped part.

Two Indians, stately-looking old fellows in spite of their painted and wrinkled faces, with that in their bearing which betokened no small opinion of their own importance, and yet who seemed disposed to regard, with a most extraordinary measure of deference, the third member of their party, albeit neither age, nor weather-bronze, nor his wild-yet well-appointed dress, could disguise the fact that he was a full-blooded white man.

Bronzed, indeed, was he, so far as his thin, stern face was not hidden by his flowing and grizzly beard, and his eagle beak was overlooked by piercing eyes of greenish-gray, from under jutting eyebrows of yellowish-white. Over his well-made and profusely ornamented hunting-shirt and leggins of deerskin he wore a species of robe of the thinnest and most pliable antelope-hide, stained with multitudinous devices and characters, among which the eye of a scholar might have sought themselves in picking out the totems of the aborigines from the well-drawn emblems and symbols of the oldest of all civilizations.

His head was covered by a close-fitting cap of some smooth fur, from under which the white hair escaped in long, scant locks, that fluttered lightly in the prairie breeze.

"The Crows have broken their treaty, and their war-parties have already been seen this side of the hills," said one of the old chiefs.

"The pale-faces have been permitted to come in far enough," said the other. "Some of our young men may strike them, or they may fall into the hands of the Crows."

"Our young men must not strike them," said the wearer of the robe; "but they must take them all prisoners, and bring them to me. This not a good day for the warriors of the Sioux. They must not even strike the Crows before to-morrow."

"I am glad, then," returned one of the old chiefs, "that some of them are coming yonder. We can tell them what they are to do. This is not a time to make bad medicine."

If the Indians of the Plains have no religion to speak of, they have a superabundance of superstition, and they most devoutly believe in what they call "medicine," but which is only another name for what all other people have also worshiped under the head of "blind luck," and its several equivalents.

It was even as the painted veteran had declared, and a number of well-mounted braves could now be seen riding closely together in something like sober order toward the spot where the trio were standing.

Their near approach, however, was a signal for the white "medicine-man" and his two associates to spring suddenly upon the backs of the horses which they had hitherto been holding, as if they deemed it beneath their dignity to await their inferiors on foot.

The conduct of the latter, however, as they came nearer, offered a very provoking sort of puzzle, although they were themselves evidently struggling with some unusual perplexity of their own.

At a distance of a good two hundred yards every man of them drew rein, nor could any amount of gesturing, or even peremptory shouting from the two old chiefs, bring them a horse's length nearer. They had decided, apparently, that it was a "bad medicine-day" for Sioux, and they did not want any of it for their own personal share.

"Go and speak with them," quietly remarked the robed white man. "Ask them what they have seen."

In an instant he was alone in his magical dignity, nor did the "young men" seem at all averse to the approach of their own kith and kin, chiefs and conjurors though they might be.

In a short space of time, however, the wrinkled messengers returned, bringing with them several of the more plucky of the hesitating warriors to tell their own story for themselves.

They would not approach any too nearly even now, but a tall Sioux brave responded to a sternly uttered question with:

"We know how the Big Medicine finds out so much when we think he is in his lodge."

"Do you?" was the sneering rejoinder. "Well, if you know, you may tell."

"We have all seen it this day," continued the awe-stricken brave. "The Big Medicine does not need to leave his lodge—there are two of him."

Under all the bronze of the aged white man's face a deep and deadly pallor crept to the roots of his hair as he listened, and he seemed almost to reel upon his saddle as he gasped:

"Have you seen him?"

"We have seen him," sententiously replied the warrior. "He is riding toward the mountains, and he does not speak."

"Then follow him!" sharply and sternly commanded the old man. "Do him no harm, for your lives, but bring him to me. Beware how you lay a hand upon him. Go!"

They needed no second command, and, as the "young braves" wheeled hurriedly away to communicate their errand to their comrades, a strong feeling of curiosity could be seen struggling with the customary composure of the two old chiefs.

"The Big Medicine is troubled," said one.

"Is it good or bad?" asked the other.

"It is a bad day," was the brief, sternly-uttered response; and the Big Medicine struck spurs to his horse, with a manifest purpose of riding by himself for the present.

Great must have been the respect with which he had inspired his savage coadjutors, for they even condescended to follow meekly in the rear, without a question as to where he was leading them.

"There cannot be any mistake," he muttered. "That fatal resemblance which darkened my boyhood, robbed me of my bride, and from which I fled into the wilderness, has crossed my path again at last, and it will surely bring evil with it. Simon—Simon Maynard—it is he, beyond a doubt; but what can have drawn him out into this wilderness? He is no miner, any more than that young woman and her companions. I see now—it is all one story, he and they. Anyhow, I will have them all in camp this day. Yellow Bear and his band cannot be many miles away. There are bloody times ahead, or I am mistaken."

Right onward, in a direction, whether he knew it or not, nearly parallel to that in which Simon Maynard was at that moment pushing, rode his marvelous counterpart, and the rude warriors whose superstitious fancy insisted upon the identity of the two might well have been pardoned. Dress them alike, and one could have passed for the other as readily as coins of the same mintage.

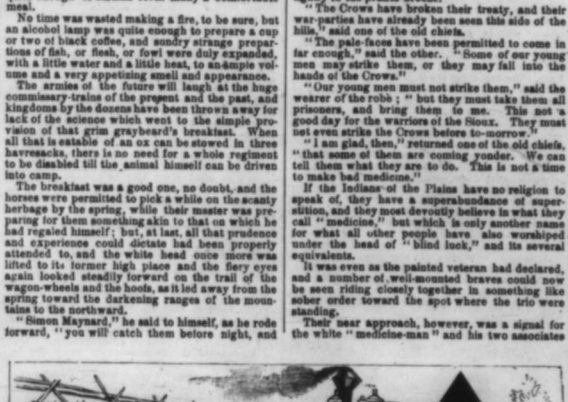
Now, however, the Big Medicine of the Sioux was suddenly aroused from the reverie into which his thoughts had driven him by the shouts of the pair of old chiefs, and the cause was straight in front of him, in the shape of a strong and well-appointed band of warriors who had silently halted to await his approach.

"Yellow Bear!" he muttered. "Now we need be in no further trouble about the Crows. I hope we will be in time to prevent any mischief."

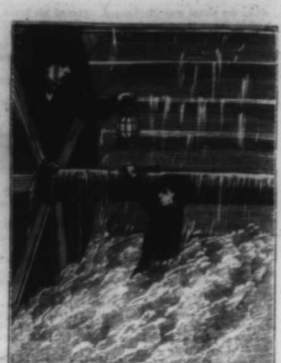
In a moment more he was among them, and there was something like dismay in his face as he listened to the news they had to tell.

Already, that morning, a party of Yellow Bear's braves had verified his prediction of "bad medicine," and the one who had escaped reported that his fellows had fallen, not by the arrows of the Crows, but by the bullets of the white men. What was more, these last, also, had fallen into the hands of the Crows.

"Bad, very bad," remarked Yellow Bear himself, a short, thick-set, burly scalper, "but the young men forget the warnings of the Big Medicine."



A WOMAN'S NERVE.—A YOUNG LADY AT OIL CITY, PA., HAVING HER FOOT CAUGHT IN A FROG ON A RAILROAD TRACK, TEARS OFF THE BOOT JUST IN TIME TO SAVE HER LIFE.—SEE PAGE 211.



A REMARKABLE VOYAGE.—A CHILD TRAVELS ONE HUNDRED FEET THROUGH THE FLUME OF A PAPER-MILL TO THE WHEEL-POST OF THE WATER-MILL.—SEE PAGE 211.

"It would have been all right to-morrow," replied the latter. "We must strike the Crows, but those pale-faces must go back to Fort Laramie, or the whole year will be bad."

A wonderful thing is "luck" in the minds which recognize it, and "bad luck" is stronger even than good.

So strong that even Yellow Bear and his warriors were content to swear obedience to the directions of their Big Medicine in spite of their bitter wrath over the disaster of the morning. They could not wonder, however, that their mystical counselor immediately led the way northward, although he knew that the Crow band was to be found in that quarter, and Yellow Bear ventured to remonstrate.

"Bad medicine?" he inquired.

"Ride fast," replied the old man. "We shall be just in time."

CHAPTER IV.

AT first Simon Maynard had utterly disregarded his strange companions, merely glancing at them out of the corners of his glittering eyes, as they galloped nearer, and pushing on more and more rapidly. Not an arrow whizzed past him, not a yell threatened him, and the silent savages, who were closing in upon him, seemed in a most disagreeable quandary as to what they should do next.

Orders were orders, however, and take him they must, and so, just as the whole party were riding up a gentle declivity, half a dozen Sioux at once disengaged their long lariats, and prepared absolutely to lasso the object of their dread and curiosity.

Forward sprang Simon Maynard's thoroughbred, under a quick touch of the spur. And then, just as he cleared the summit of the "rise," and as the folds of the lariats were launched through the air, the prairie beyond suddenly rang with a chorus of fierce whooping, and the Sioux braves found themselves in the immediate presence of five times their number of their deadliest enemies.

Tangled and hampered with coil after coil, Simon Maynard was dragged heavily from the saddle, while the two startled steeds sprang even more swiftly forward.

"We've got him!" was about the true interpretation of a dozen guttural exclamations around him, but it was very much what the Crows also were shouting, for they fully believed they had "got" that party of Sioux.

And so, truly, they would have done, had it not been for the sagacity with which the Big Medicine had urged forward the warriors of Yellow Bear.

The plucky messengers sent to arrest old Simon had fastened on their prey like bulldogs, and presented a truly valorous front to their charging foes.

They were no chaff to be swept away, and no children to follow, as every Crow well knew; but none the less did the latter instantly swoop down upon them, riding around and around them in a narrowing circle, from which escape seemed impossible.

So it seemed, and so it would have been, but just now the column of Yellow Bear, with the white hair and flowing robe of the Big Medicine well in front, came dashing in to the rescue, fully restoring the equality of numbers and adding something of a surprise to the vigor of their onset.

Scattered and broken for the moment, but neither defeated nor disheartened, the warriors of Red Arrow were driven back over the crest of the hill, while Simon Maynard was lifted to his feet and into the saddle from which an unlucky redskin had just been speared.

As he once more glanced keenly around him, however, his eyes fell upon that which sent a singular spasm, it might be of pain, through every nerve of his attenuated frame.

"Andrew?" he exclaimed, loudly. "Can that be you?"

"Simon!" was the only answer; but the Yellow Bear added, in a low voice, to the warriors round him:

"All right, now. Big Medicine all here. Both of him. Wonder what come next?"

But if Simon Maynard's eyes turned for a moment from an encounter with those into which they had been gazing, it was only to find cause for yet another tremor.

"Andrew!" he exclaimed, "look yonder. My daughter and her husband have fallen into the hands of the Crows. Can you not save them?"

"Perhaps," was the rejoinder; "but what shall I do with you, meantime? I don't want you to lose your scalp—it is altogether too much like mine."

Strangely alike were the two withered faces which were peering into each other for a solution of the problem so cynically propounded; but the ordinary chances of the battlefield were likely to solve it for them, as the Crows were fast rallying for a renewal of the struggle; while the Sioux, forgetting their "bad medicine" in their brief success, were not waiting to be attacked, but at that very moment were charging down the slope with an impetus which bore Simon Maynard and his "double" irresistibly with them.

These two, however, were not the only interested spectators of that savage combat, for old Simon's glance over the rise had told him the truth, and Sam Garrett and his sweet-faced bride, with Harry Poole, and even Antone, had a very distinct conception of the fact that their own fortunes were hanging in the balance, as well as those of Red Arrow and Yellow Bear.

Right glad were Red Arrow and his braves, in their moment of deadly peril, that they had restrained from scalping those two white men that morning, and an awful thing it was for the warriors of Yellow Bear when their best and foremost began to pitch from their ponies under the terrible precision of that brace of repeating rifles. Riding, as they did, a little in the rear of their Crow allies, and picking out their targets with a good deal of security, Sam and Harry emptied their cartridge-chambers as coolly as if they had been shooting for a prize. And so they were, too, if their own scalps were to be considered worth winning.

Conical balls, at less than two hundred yards, were undoubtedly entitled to rank as "bad medicine," at least for such red men as came in their way, and the Sioux charge wavered, slackened, scattered, and was broken in all directions by the exulting rush of Red Arrow and his yelling followers.

Not a man of the former, moreover, but now recalled the ominous predictions of the "Big Medicine," and remembered that this was a "bad day" for him and his tribe, and, veterans as they were, the fighting heart began rapidly to ooze out of them, as they were pushed more effectively by their fierce pursuers.

The Crows, however, were in "an enemy's country," and Red Arrow knew too well the men with whom he had to deal to carry a matter of that sort too far.

There was no telling at what moment the broken remnants of Yellow Bear's band might receive such reinforcements as would reverse the unpleasant features of their relative position.

The victorious Crows were therefore called back from their eager pursuit, and compelled to content themselves with such harvest of scalps and glory at they had already secured, while their leader magnanimously tendered to his white allies the acknowledgments to which their timely services entitled them.

The whole Crow nation, he averred, would for ever regard them as brothers of the most brotherly sort, and how much more he might have said can only be conjectured, but just them he was interrupted by an exclamation of Harry Poole.

"Here's your father-in-law, Sam, and no mistake. Those lariats have saved him this time. The Crows have spared him because the Sioux tied him up. Now they're letting him loose. What's that he's going for in that reckless way?"

"Harry! Red Arrow, my friend, this way!" exclaimed Sam, as he sprang forward.

But a hand was on his arm at that moment, and a trembling voice murmured in his ear:

"Oh, Sam—my father!"

"Come with me, Lottie, dear. We'll take care of him. I'd as lief meet him now as any other time, and you mustn't be afraid."

"I'm only afraid they'll hurt him," said the young wife, as she clung more closely to her husband.

They were none too soon, with all their haste, for a tall Crow warrior was resenting, knife in hand, the interference of Simon Maynard between him and the trophy he was about to secure from a form which lay prostrate on the trampled and bloody grass.

The voice of Red Arrow himself was scarcely sufficient to turn back the grumbling brave, but Sam Garrett and his friend strengthened his authority by a motion toward the handles of their revolvers, and both Simon and the scalp were saved.

"Andrew! Andrew! Have they killed him?" exclaimed old Simon, as he bent low above the outstretched body; for it was indeed the Big Medicine of the Sioux whom he had protected so courageously.

Something in the tones of his voice seemed to reach the senses of the apparently slain man, and a look of recognition flashed suddenly out from under the white eyebrows.

"Simon, are you here? Yes, I think they have done for me at last. I knew this was to be a bad day. Are your daughter and the rest safe?"

Strangely indeed had the "softening process" worked on the heart of old Simon Maynard that morning, for the hot, big drops that were falling now on the withered face of the dying man came from the greenish-gray eyes which had been so like his own even in their strong hardness and bitterness of expression.

"It's all right, Simon," continued his brother. "That's your daughter; is it? Give her my robe, and tell her husband there's a fortune in it, if he knows enough to find it. No, Simon, I can't do any weeping, even for the sake of resembling you. I'd as lief die now as any other time. Don't let that scoundrel scalp me; and bury me so deep, that the coyotes can't dig me up. Don't forget about the robe, Simon. Your daughter's my niece, you know. Tell her to stoop down here and kiss her uncle goodby."

Fainter and fainter the steady voice had grown, and the bystanders, as well as old Simon, had leaned forward closer and closer to catch the failing utterance.

Slowly enough a conception of the truth had crept into the brain of even Sam's trembling wife, and, in response to the last request, she bent quickly down and pressed a most kindly and sympathizing kiss upon the old man's forehead.

The keen gray eyes again, for the arrows of the Crows had done their work.

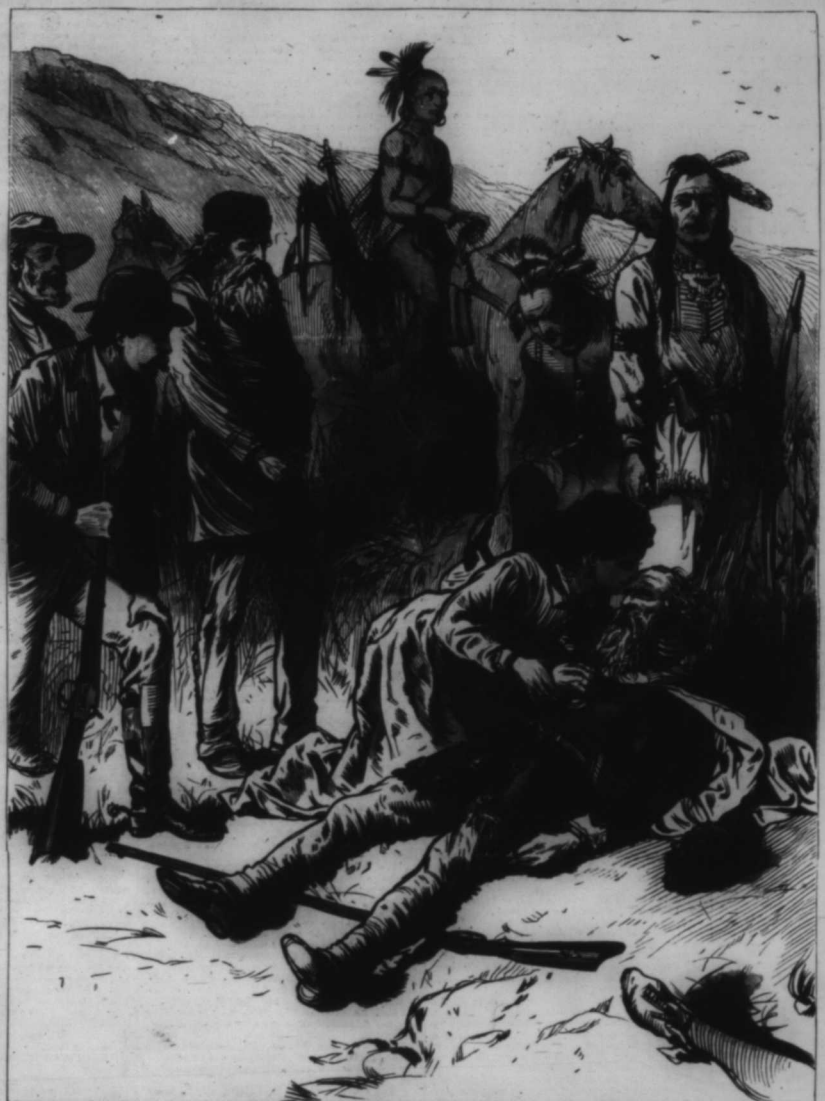
According to all the laws of Indian warfare, Sam and his friend were entitled to at least as much of that day's trophies as Simon Maynard and the body of his brother might be supposed to amount to; nor was it much more difficult to secure the two horses of the former, and the dying requests were religiously attended to.

First, however, as old Simon rose from his last look at the face so marvelously like his own, with the unwonted tears still wet upon his cheeks, he met the eyes of his daughter, more tearful than his had been, in such a mingling of repentance and appeal that his arms flew open in spite of himself.

"Sam," growled Harry Poole, "what in all the world did you and Lottie run away from him for?"

"That's what did it for him," said Sam, as he pointed to the prostrate form of Lottie's strange uncle. "I'd have given a good deal for a talk with that man before the Crows hit him."

An hour later, as the Crows were preparing to move on again and the white men were discussing what might be their best and safest way home,



THE BIG MEDICINE OF THE SIOUX.—"IN RESPONSE TO THE LAST REQUEST, SHE BENT QUICKLY DOWN AND PRESSED A MOST KINDLY AND SYMPATHIZING KISS UPON THE OLD MAN'S FOREHEAD. THE GRAY EYES CLOSED FAST AS SHE DID SO, AND THEY NEVER OPENED AGAIN."—SEE PAGE 2

Antone threw broadcast over the end of the nearest wagon the splendid antelope-skin robe which had that morning adorned the "Big Medicine" of the Sioux.

"Turn it over," said Harry Poole; "let's see the other side of it. That's your fortune, Mrs. Sam Garrett."

Wonderfully complex and grotesque as was the exterior of that conjurer's robe, the other side was likely to be even more interesting.

"It looks like a map," said Lottie.

"It is a map, and no mistake!" exclaimed her father.

"And of this very country we're in, or I'm a sinner," added Harry. "Sam, have you forgotten your book-learning? Can't you make something out of these letters?"

"The funniest mixture I ever saw," said Sam. "Indian words spelled with Greek letters, with here and there a dash of Hebrew. Hullo, what does that mean? Harry—Lottie, the old man's robe will tell us all he could have told."

"About what?" said Harry.

"Don't you see?" said Sam. "Of course you don't; but I do. That map gives the result of old Andrew Maynard's prospecting for nobody knows how many years, and it's just gold—gold—gold—gold, all over it."

"Small good it will do us just now," said Harry, ruefully.

"That's so," said Sam; "but some day we can come back for it, if we ever get home."

Well, it was weeks and weeks, even with the help of their Crow friends, before the singular bridal-tour wound up in a place of safety, and they carried with them the robe of the Big Medicine of the Sioux.

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET;

Or,

Fun at Mrs. Hawk's.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

SNATCHED AWAY.

MR. WESTLAKE was a colonial broker, and a West Indian sugar-planter, with whom he did an extensive business, had called to see him.

Mrs. Westlake had heard her husband express his intention of running down to Skinner's Pride, and after what had occurred that morning, and the conversation he had had with his son upon the marriage question, she thought it possible he might have gone thither impulsively.

Mr. Ranoe was so bent upon seeing his broker, that he proposed taking the first train and making the journey to Crowswold on the chance of catching him at his supposed place of sojourn.

Theodore, at the same time, was, at his mother's suggestion, to travel in another direction, to a place where his father occasionally visited, and where it was thought possible he might then be located.

At all events, it would be only a journey.

It was a most uncongenial commission just then for Theodore, who was trying to fly back on the wings of love to Violet, whom he had left awaiting his return.

But it was an important matter of business that admitted of no delay, and as there was no escape he swallowed his spleen as well as he could, and prepared to sacrifice his inclinations to his duty.

"You can ride up to town with me," suggested Mr. Ranoe to Theodore; "it will save time."

Of course the latter expressed himself obliged to him for his offer, and inwardly execrating the insuspicious fates that were having him away so abruptly, he hastily thrust a few necessaries into his leathern travelling-bag and hurried to the spot where he had just spent the most blissful half-hour of his existence, to take farewell of his *inamorata*, and explain the imperative necessity that would separate them for a brief season.

But, to his dismay, Violet was no longer there.

"I told her to wait for me," he soliloquized, tretfully; "perhaps, however, she misunderstood me, or, as I have been away longer than I promised, she has gone to look for me, or perhaps returned to the house."

But however this might be, there was no time then for him to search for his missing treasure, precious as it was.

He therefore hurried back to the interior, and inquired if Miss Luton had returned.

But no one had seen her, and Mrs. Westlake's voice was heard calling to know if he was ready.

He had only time to write hastily upon a scrap of paper:

"MY DARLING—I am suddenly compelled to take a wild-goose chase into the country, to hunt up the governor—an important matter of business (confound it, I say) which I cannot escape. It goes terribly against the grain, but there, it cannot be helped; we shall meet again, love—how soon I cannot precisely say, but the sooner the happier for me—I trust I may say for us both. I went to the charmed bower, where I left you, to say good-by, but my hour had forsaken her paradise, and that sweet, sad pleasure was denied me. I have no time to say more, I am waited for; therefore, my heart's treasure, until we meet again, God bless you, and farewell.

"Your adorer for ever and ever,

"THEODORE."

This honeyed but hastily scrawled billet he screwed up and placed in the small drawer of the looking-glass in the bedroom occupied by Rose and Violet, into which sanctuary, finding it unoccupied, he rushed desperately as he passed.

"She will be sure to find it there," he argued, mentally, as he ran down-stairs.

Three minutes after he was hurrying along the road to London, seated vis-à-vis to his companion, who spoke eloquently of rice and sugar-canes to a deaf ear.

Although Theodore appeared to listen attentively enough, in reality he heard nothing.

He was thinking of something far sweeter to him than sugar-cane—that something being his blue-eyed, golden-haired Violet.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DREAM DISPELLED.

NO sooner had Elizabeth Skinner reached the spot she deemed suitable for the conference she sought, than without any preliminary remarks in the way of explanation she rudely flung from her the wrist she had grasped so spitefully.

"Are you not ashamed to look me in the face, you bold girl you?" she exclaimed, violently, her stern eyes darting hateful flashes at the scared girl before her.

"Why should I be ashamed?" asked Violet.

"Why should you?" repeated Miss Skinner, with indignant emphasis. "Why? Do you dare lay claim to the title of a modest girl, and yet ask that question?"

"I—I scarcely know what you mean," returned Violet.

"Oh, you are very innocent—very!" was the sneering reply; "any one would have thought so had they seen you a few moments since reclining in the arms of Mr. Theodore Westlake. How particularly interesting and innocent they would have thought you looked!"

Feeling, in her own pure and innocent mind, that she was self-acquitted, Violet could reply to her angry interlocutor:

"I am not aware that I have done anything wrong or immodest."

"You mean that you will not be aware; that you are wilfully blind!" fiercely retorted Elizabeth Skinner. "Your pretended ignorance, or innocence, or whatever you please to call it, is only a cloak, beneath which you seek to shroud your treachery."

"My treachery!" echoed Violet, with astonishment. "You accuse me of what I never dreamt of. But since you seem so incensed against me perhaps you will tell me distinctly what dreadful offense I have committed?"

"I will, then," cried Miss Skinner, in a voice hoarse with passion, "and deny it if you can; you love Mr. Theodore Westlake!"

"Well, if I do, is it a crime to love?"

"Yes, certainly. At least in your case it is," was the passionate reply, "for I love Theodore Westlake."

"I'm very sorry, I'm sure," said Violet, innocently, hoping to soothe her irritation.

"You are sorry!" cried Miss Elizabeth, glaring like a fiend; "and why, pray? What right have you to be sorry because I love Theodore Westlake?"

Violet felt that her rival asked her most awkward questions; questions which to parry was almost as difficult as to answer.

Again she hesitated before replying, and Miss Skinner continued with equal acidity:

"I suppose next you will have the audacity to tell me you pity me; you, with your baby-face and figure! Ha, ha!" she laughed, bitterly.

"I am sure it is not my wish to——"

"Not your wish? You speak like a fool or an idiot. I tell you it is your wish to win Theodore; you wish nothing so much. But let me tell you I wish to win him, too, and not only do I wish, but I am determined that I will win him at any cost. Before you came in the way he paid me attentions and treated me with consideration and respect. Now all is changed; I can scarcely get a word or a look, much less a smile, from him. You have stolen them away; it is you who are the cause of all. But I warn you that from th a moment I will not submit to it."

The speaker glared at her listener with fiercely flashing eyes, as though she would, if possible, have scathed her with their light as she stood before her.

But Violet was not deficient in spirit, and she said, quietly:

"If Mr. Theodore thinks proper to pay me attention, I presume he is as perfectly at liberty to do so as I am to receive them."

"No!" almost shrieked Elizabeth, with a perfect volley of wrath; "Theodore Westlake is engaged to me, and no man under such circumstances is his own property; neither would any modest girl encourage the attentions of one whom she knew was under engagement to another."

"Is Mr. Westlake really—a—engaged to you?" she asked at length, in a faltering voice.

"Of course he is!" snapped Miss Skinner, indignantly. "I suppose you will pretend you did not know it?"

"I did not know it," returned Violet, in a low, troubled tone.

"At all events, you know it now," Elizabeth replied, harshly, utterly unmoved by the distress so evidently depicted on the features of Violet, who ejaculated, in a broken voice, apparently unconscious that she was speaking aloud:

"Engaged! engaged—to her?"

"Yes, engaged to me!" returned Miss Skinner, triumphantly, rejoicing at the effect her words had produced; "Mr. Westlake and myself have been engaged for some time, and we shall be married in due course by the wish of his parents and mine."

"I never heard of this," exclaimed Violet, in an anguished tone; "I never had the least suspicion of any such engagement. Oh, is this indeed the case?"

"If you doubt my word, ask Mr. and Mrs. Westlake; they will confirm it," was Elizabeth's cold reply.

"They will!" cried a voice close by in response, and at the same instant Mrs. Westlake, who had been for some time an unseen listener to the foregoing conversation, made her appearance. "I can, and in my husband's name, do confirm your words, my dear Miss Skinner."

Her usual good-natured, motherly expression had degenerated into an angry sternness.

There might have been something to account for this from the fact that she had held in her hand a piece of crumpled paper (Theodore's note) which, in casually going to the drawer where he had recently placed it, she had discovered.

"What this young lady tells you is perfectly true," she said to Violet, "and I am quite shocked at what I have heard so accidentally and so unwillingly. Had I known what I do now," remarked Theodore's mother, sternly, "I should never have tolerated your presence in my house, Miss Luton. The annoying circumstances of which you are the cause justify me in saying this, though at the same time I much regret being obliged to speak as plainly as I do."

Every vestige of color had faded out of poor Violet's face, and she looked in her dead whiteness as if she would have fallen fainting on the ground, and Mrs. Westlake, who was really a kind-hearted woman, stepped forward to offer her support.

But the first touch of her hand had the effect of rousing the young girl.

With a sudden strength which the excitement of the moment supplied she rushed away, and paused not till she reached her room.

Then, with trembling hands, she turned the key in the door, and struggling to the couch, sank down upon it and burst into a bitter flood of scalding tears.

Long and painfully she wept, as one cruel thought after another swept over her like drenching waves.

Gradually her sobs grew less violent, and her tears ceased to flow.

She was calmer, and had resolved what to do.

A little before the dinner-hour a tap came at the door.

Violet opened it, and found Mrs. Westlake standing outside, and, to do the latter justice, she felt really grieved at the pale, wan face that met her gaze.

It was all in vain she tried to coax her young guest to come down to dinner. Violet excused herself under plea of a headache, which was a perfectly true reason, and remained in her own room.

The evening passed on, and at about nine o'clock Rose, Milly, Harry Targent and Charles Saville, who had been paying a visit in the neighborhood, returned.

"Where's Vio?" was the first question they asked, as they missed their companion.

"She is not quite well, I think," said Mrs. Westlake, "and has not been down to dinner. You will find her in her room."

Milly hurried to her schoolfellow's room in much anxiety to know what was the matter; but the room was empty: no Violet was there.

The news was speedily communicated that she was missing.

Every room in the house was visited; the garden was searched; but Violet was not to be found.

Ten o'clock struck, eleven, twelve, and still she did not return.

There was a general consternation. However, on their going to rest, the truth came out. The light of the candle revealed to Rose Royston two notes lying on the dressing-table, one addressed to herself, the other to Mrs. Westlake.

The contents of the former were painfully and inexplicably brief, and read as follows:

"DARLING ROSIE—I am gone away. Perhaps you may never see me again. God bless you!

"Your loving, unhappy VIOLET."

To Mrs. Westlake she wrote:

"MADAM—I am sorry that I have unconsciously been the cause of so much annoyance to you. I was not aware that any engagement existed between your son and Miss Skinner, and felt quite shocked when I heard it confirmed by your lips. Now that I know the truth, I feel that the only proper course for me to pursue is to leave your house at once. Pardon my abrupt departure, but I think it will be for the best. At least, I shall no longer disturb the peace of any of your family.

"VICTORIA LUTON."

These communications were sufficiently explicit. Violet had undoubtedly taken her departure. Whither?

CHAPTER XL.

A DOMESTIC HURRICANE.

VIOLET'S absence produced quite a blank in the social, happy little circle of friends at Rose Lodge.

Mrs. Westlake explained to her daughter the cause of her schoolfellow's sudden flight, and Milly lost no time in stating the facts to her companions.

There was a general feeling of indignation, under the influence of which Miss Elizabeth Skinner devoted an unbearable nuisance, whom it would be quite just and right to send to Coventry and keep there.

But as they could not very well do this they made the nearest approach to it by taking as little notice of her as possible.

Theodore, after a fruitless journey, returned on the following evening.

As soon as he arrived he hastened to the drawing-room and after briefly informing his mother of the result of his mission, without waiting to make any further remark, or take any refreshment, rushed into the garden in search of Violet.

It was with intense disappointment and dismay he heard the account of her abrupt disappearance.

Mrs. Westlake thought it prudent not to show him the note Violet had addressed to her; nor could Rose, without revealing the secret of the change of names, show him hers.

But she memorized its contents from memory, and they filled him with indescribable terror.

Brief as it was, there was a tone of sad despair in every word that led him to apprehend all kinds of danger.

"What could have induced her to leave in this manner, and to write in this ominous tone?" he exclaimed, almost distractedly.

In tones of indignation, Milly answered her brother.

"It's that Elizabeth Skinner's doings. I know she hates Miss Luton on your account, Dore; and she has taken advantage of your absence to spit her venom at poor Vic, until she could bear it no longer. I feel sure this is how it is."

"And Miss Skinner thinks to have it all her own way, does she?" he burst out. "Imagines she's going to turn and twist me round her finger like a ribbon or a scrap of paper, I suppose. She'll find herself greatly mistaken. I wouldn't marry Elizabeth Skinner though she were clad in golden tissue, and showered with diamonds."

Milly, Rose, Charley and Harry warmly applauded his determination, and then followed an anxious discussion as to the whereabouts of their lost friend.

There were two persons with whom she might have sought an asylum—Constance and Charlotte.

"Depend upon it, she's gone over to Constance's," said Milly, confidently.

"The shortest way of discovering will be to go and see," suggested Theodore, anxiously. "I'll tell you what we'll do; you and I, Milly and Miss Rattle can drive over to Charlotte Merry's, at Norwood."

The proposal was acted upon instantly, but Violet was at neither place.

Theodore was in despair.

One solitary ray alone came through the misty uncertainty to cheer the lover and the circle of mourners—Violet would assuredly write.

But another day passed, and no letter came.

That night Mr. Westlake returned.

Mr. Ranoe's journey had been successful, and he and the merchant had transacted their business satisfactorily.

The old gentleman being put in possession of the particulars of Violet's disappearance, was half inclined to rejoice that one so dangerous to his plans had taken her departure.

But he altered his opinion when he found his son deaf to all his arguments.

Never had such a stormy altercation been heard within the walls of Rose Lodge as took place on that night between the father and son—and which ended by Theodore flatly refusing even to speak again to Miss Skinner.

The subject of this little discussion listened to it all, and heard to her great chagrin the fierce determination of her anticipated bridegroom.

Whatever Miss Skinner's opinion of her future prospects might have been, she had still sufficient spite to pocket the affronts she had received, and seem to overlook them—in fine, do anything, submit to anything, if she could only triumph over her rival by winning Theodore Westlake's hand.

CHAPTER XLI.

VIOLET'S DESTINATION.

LET us go back to the evening of Violet's departure. They will then see her, about dusk, steal softly down the stairs—with nothing in her hand but a small leathern bag—and cautiously leave the house, watching carefully at the same time to see that she is not observed.

Reaching the outside, she hurried on, until, having walked some little distance, she paused and looked back with a lingering, wistful, melancholy glance at the spot where she had passed so bright—but alas! so brief—a season of happiness.

Once fairly started, she stopped no more, but continued her journey along the road, townward, observed by many but heeding none.

She went boldly on, evincing no signs of fatigue, and at length came to a stop at the gates of Meditation House.

Yes!—strange as it may appear Violet Leigh had returned a voluntary prisoner to her place of captivity! a place which, with all its dullness and seclusion, she had reason to wish she had never left.

There had been a time—no very remote period, either—when Violet could not have stood before the portals of the scholastic mansion without a kind of palpitating sensation of awe stealing over her. Now all this weakness had passed away. Her heart's motion did not quicken in the least as she deliberately pulled the bell, and calmly listened to the clap-clanging noise it made, as it told Janet Sly, who was quietly taking her supper, that someone was waiting.

"Do ever can it be?" she soliloquized; "at this time o' night?—not missis, surely?"

This sudden idea stimulated her motions, and she started up to answer the summons.

Janet was a prudent, cautious woman, and though it was a moonlight night, she took the candle in her hand as she went to the door.

This was soon reached and opened, and, descending the steps, the candle in one hand and the key in the other, she approached the gate.

"Do is it?" inquired Janet, as she held up the candle, and sought to scrutinize the visitor through the bars.

"Miss Leigh," was the answer.

The name acted like an electric shock upon the nerves of the astonished Janet, and the candle quite staggered under it. But quickly recovering herself, she unlocked the gate and threw it open.

"What, Miss Violet?" she ejaculated, in profound astonishment. "Is it possible it's yourself?"

"Yes," replied the young lady: "I have returned, as you see."

"Well, I really! 'Ooever 'ud a thought it?" grasped the housemaid, in an ejaculatory and bewildered manner; "and 'ave you come back for good, miss?" she asked.

"Yes," responded Violet, with a sigh, "and as I feel rather tired, I will go in at once."

"I'm sure I don't know what I shall do, miss?" she said, after closing and bolting the door; "not expecting you at this time of night, no beds made, no sheets aired, no nothink, an' the fire bein' out, I——"

"Oh, never mind," said Violet, wearily; "it's of no consequence. A chair or sofa will do for me."

As this arrangement would save the housemaid some trouble, who was suffering from a periodical attack of lazineon to which she was subject, she cheerfully assented to the proposition.

"Well, miss, if you could manage with the sofa for to-night, to-morrer I can get everythink to rights. Damp sheets are my 'orror; they're so dangerous."

"I will," returned Violet, "if you will be good enough to show me which room I am to occupy."

Janet conducted the young lady to one of the numerous apartments, in which was a couch, and on which Violet, exhausted in mind and body, instantly sank.

The housemaid began to be afflicted with intense curiosity.

"Is Miss Royston coming back, too?" she inquired.

"I don't know, I'm sure," was the drowsy response.

"It's strange you shouldn't know that, miss," remarked the housemaid, "since you was together. I think it's perticklar strange. It was very wrong of you young ladies to leave at all as you did; leastways, that's my opinion," continued Janet, presuming on the young girl's weary and dejected manner.

But the latter, thoroughly tired out, condescended no answer, which was extremely unsatisfactory to Janet.

"Of course you know where Miss Rose is, as you was such friends?" she said, after a moment.

"Oh, yes; I know that," returned Violet.

"Where?" eagerly inquired the housemaid. "I'm sure you'd tell me, won't you?" she added, in a blarneying tone.

"No; I'm not at liberty to tell," Violet answered, definitely.

"Not at liberty?" exclaimed Janet, in a vixenish tone. "But it's your duty to tell me, miss—your bounden duty."

"You'll excuse me, then, if for once I neglect doing it," was Violet's quiet reply.

"You won't tell me, then?" Janet repeated, compressing her lips spitefully.

"Certainly not," returned Violet, in a tone of decided firmness.

"Well," exclaimed the amazed Janet, taking a deep inspiration, "I must say the 'tion's of yourself an' Miss Royston surpasses everythink I ever 'eard on in the whole course of my life. I never experienced such condue', never—never! To go away as you did without sayin' a word, or considerin' what my feelin's must a-bin—it's dreadful! I declare I didn't get a wink o' sleep for a week afterward. But there's one thing in perticklar as puzzled my brains, an' that is, 'owever yer contrived to get out as yer did, an' the key in my pocket all the time. That's the most extr'ordinary succumstance. I can't think for the life of me 'ow you managed it, an' now you've come back, I expect you'll tell me, miss. I do, indeed, an' I shan't be satisfied unle-s you do, so the sooner you explain the matter the better."

Janet closed the door, and placed her back against it in a manner that plainly indicated she expected a full and particular account of her.

She was therefore considerably scared when Violet, starting impatiently from her seat, exclaimed, with a dignity unusual to her:

"I am not aware that I am in any way responsible to you for my conduct, and I beg you will not annoy me with any more impertinent questions. I am tired, and wish to be alone. But you may rest assured that I shall not gratify your curiosity either now or at any other time. As I went away so I have returned of my own accord. Let that be sufficient."

The housemaid, feeling herself effectually snubbed, slunk out of the room, resolved to let Miss Violet know whom she had to deal with for the rest of the vacation.

In her indignation she forgot to remove the key of the door, which Violet immediately took possession of, and having locked herself in securely, threw herself upon the couch to forget her sorrow and disappointment in sleep, if possible. But in the excitement of her thoughts, and her deep depression, sound repose was impossible, and she arose in the morning sad and unrefreshed.

When Janet brought her breakfast up-stairs, the domestic became conscious that the key was not in the door, and she blamed herself severely for not securing it whilst she had the opportunity.

She mentioned the circumstance to Violet, who replied that she considered herself entitled to the key of her own apartment—and that having possession of it, she most decidedly intended to keep it.

Janet, having no other resource, was compelled to submit to this arrangement, though she did so with a very bad grace.

Violet, after breakfast, went for a stroll in the playground, where she met Peter, to the great surprise and delight of that personage.

"Lor', Miss Violet!" he exclaimed, "is it really you come back again?"

"Yes," returned the young girl, with a sigh, "here I am once more."

The page looked at her in astonishment—her sorrowful tone and manner perplexed him.

"No one ain't drove yer back, 'ave they?" he inquired.

"Oh, no," she answered; "I have returned voluntarily.

This confession puzzled Peter more than ever.

Suddenly an idea flashed across him.

"No one ain't bin insultin' yer, 'as they, miss?" he asked, clinching his small fist and looking heroic. "If I thought so, I'd——"

"Oh, no, thank you," answered Violet, unable, in spite of her sadness, to suppress a smile at the vehemence of the chivalrous youth; "it is not that. You must not ask me why I have returned; it is a secret. Neither must you under any circumstances let any one know that I am here. T-at is also a secret, which you will keep, I am confident, if I ask you; will you not?"

"I should think I would, too, if you wishes it," returned Peter, vehemently. "I wishes any one luck o' all the information they gets out o' me."

This enjoined secrecy was entirely congenial to the romantic disposition of the small youth, and his former hopes began to revive a little.

Slowly the days dragged their full length along within the monotonous boundaries of Meditation House, where Violet awaited the expiration of the vacation.

In the meantime Milly and Rose had accepted an invitation from Constance to pass a few weeks with her.

Theodore and his friend Harry made flying visits to and fro during this term, but the happiness of the whole party was marred by the absence of Violet.

Not once did it enter the minds of any of her friends where she had secluded herself.

Meditation House would have been the very last place they would have guessed at.

Theodore was inconsolable, and Miss Elizabeth Skinner, finding herself utterly neglected, returned to Shropshire.

And thus time continued to pass, until the last day of the vacation arrived, and it was necessary for Mrs. Hawk and her family to bid adieu to the sea-breeze and return once more to their professional duties.

Accordingly, in due time they arrived once more at Meditation House, to receive the intelligence that Miss Leigh had returned.

(To be continued.)

"Wild Rose and Violet" was commenced in No. 844.

THREE BOYS.

A Story of a High School.

By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER XV.

THERE was little probability that the frightened blackbirds would settle again among those bushes that day, and the boys made their search a thorough one.

"It's the only game we're likely to get," said Sol. "I wouldn't shoot 'em at any other season of the year, but just now it's allowable."

"Why?" asked Van.

"I don't know, unless it's because there's so many of 'em, and they're all so fat. Won't Mother Porrance stare when she sees 'em!"

"She's seen blackbirds before."

"But not so many on one string. Besides, she thinks we're over at the academy."

"No, she don't. She's heard of the yellow-jackets by this time."

"What'll we do now?" asked Pat.

"Shoot at a mark with the carbine. Then we'll go home to dinner.

And so they did, but they were not quite at the end of their day's adventures. They had made fair practice with the carbine, only that it made their shoulders ache for them with the way it had of kicking.

"It's a mule of a gun," said Sol.

"Troth," said Pat, "I know of a man or two I'd like to set behind that thing, with the strongest kind of a cartridge in it. Oh, but wouldn't it land 'em!"

While they were discussing the virtues and vices of their several weapons they were slowly working their way homeward, and were, just now, passing by the great barnyard of the miller's farm. It was a big yard, but there was nothing alive in it that day except a pig or two, and some wandering hens and chickens.

"No game at all," said Van, but Sol suddenly exclaimed:

"Game! Van, do you see that spotted fox?"

"A fox! Where is he?"

"Fox, did yar say?" exclaimed Pat.

"None of your common foxes," gravely responded Sol, in a deep whisper, as he pointed across the barnyard. "That's one of the genuine spotted foxes. Fur's worth anything. They make ladies' muffs out of it. Van, you must go for that beast with your carbine. My gun might miss at that distance, and the ball-muzzle isn't loaded up."

"A fox?" grumbled Van. "It's a funny-looking fox. I never hunted foxes, but I've seen one, and pictures, too. They don't look like that one."

"Of course not. Who ever said they did? Quick, now. Draw a good bead on him."

Van had rested his carbine on the barnyard fence, and was squinting through the sights, strong as were his keen eyes and the "spotted fox" rolled off from the trough, in token of the accuracy of Van's aim.

"I've killed him!"

"No, Van, hold on. I wouldn't get over the fence, because we don't want the skin of that fox. It's out of season for 'em. Winter's the only time to gather fur."

"But we can carry him home and show him?"

"No, Van, my boy. All this part of the valley 'll know he's been killed soon enough. We needn't tell anybody we did it. Let's march on Bunkerville. Oh, but don't I wish the Hinckley boys had that fellow in their desk?"

"How?" suddenly exclaimed Pat Nolan. "It's a fox, is it? Then, I'spose I don't know what that smell is? 'Deed and I'm not so green as all that."

"Fox, indeed!" added Van.

"Some people call 'em skunks, that's a fact," remarked Sol, "and it may be that's the right name. Just now I don't want him for a fox, and if he was a skunk, way, that's his own lookout, not ours. I pity the next man that has to go to that barn for anything."

"Unless he's a bad cold in his head," suggested Pat, as he and the others hurried away in the direction of the village.

"Solomon," said Van Rivington, "you've sold me nicely, that's a fact, but if I don't some some kind of a fox on you before we've done with it you may take my hat."

Sol gave a grin that did not make him look any handsomer, but he promised himself, in his own mind, to keep a sharp lookout for the kind of "fox" Van spoke of.

"Wasn't it a mean sort of a thing to do?" asked the latter, as they walked along.

"No," said Sol. "Old Deacon Smith, the miller, is a curious old party. He won't let us boys go swimming in his pond. Now we've been saving his chickens from foxes and returning good for evil. We even left him our game. He's welcome to it, skin and all."

"Smell and all, you mean," said Pat.

"Just so. Now let's hurry, and we'll have some of our birds broiled. The rest of 'em 'll make a splendid potpie for Sunday's dinner. It 'll be a great help to poor Mrs. Porrance."

"She's kept us very well, so far."

"Always does, the first week; but she's an idea boys eat too much, and she does what she can to prevent it. Just you wait."

"I'll have enough to eat," said Van; "you see if I don't!"

"That's the way I feel about it. The second week she seems to tell last year."

A grand morning the boys had had of it, for a short one, but if they supposed they had been forgotten all that time they were mistaken, much as they had done for the future comfort of Deacon Smith and his family.

The latter were all away from home, on a bit of a visit, that day, and would not know anything about the "spotted fox" till their return.

They would surely know them.

In a village like Bunkerville, with such an academy in it, there could be no more general subject of chat than the daily goings on at the latter. There had, therefore, been a good deal of talk that morning. Even the weather had been neglected on account of the yellow-jackets.

Before noon everybody knew all about it, and just who had been stung and where.

The latter point was indeed one of absorbing interest, especially to the parties on whom the stings had been inflicted.

The part taken by Sol and Van did not by any means remain a secret.

More than one sage gossip wagged his or her head, as the case might be, and ominously remarked:

"Warned the doctor, did they? I'll warrant they knew a good deal more about it than they told him."

Perhaps they were right about that, but who was to guess or find out exactly how much they did know?

Whatever may have been his suspicions, Doctor Betts had no good reason for laying the blame on any one boy in particular. Certainly not on Bob and Joe Hinkley, more than on any other pair of youngsters.

He would have given a good deal to have gotten at the bottom of what seemed to him a very great mystery.

All the men to whom he applied for counsel, including the academy "trustees," laughed at any notion that Sol and Van had themselves done the mischief.

"If you've any doubt about it," remarked one old farmer, "just you collar the next yallar jacket's nest you come across and see how fur you'll kerry it. If you'll fetch it to my house I'll take keer on it fur ye."

Doctor Betts concluded not to try any such experiment, but he was pretty well satisfied in his own mind that those insects had not invaded that schoolroom without human help.

Nor was he the only person who was puzzled by the circumstances of the case.

As soon as he could do so in safety that afternoon, Bob Hinckley made a flying visit to Van's desk.

There it was, as safe and sound as ever, to all appearances.

He tried the lid and found it securely locked.

"Took 'em out and locked it after 'em," he muttered to himself. "He's a queer fellow. Wonder if hornets and wasps won't sting him? I've heard tell of such. Well, we've missed it this time, and I'm strong so I can't but justsee. Never mind; we'll get even with him and Sol Rogers yet. See if we don't."

If Bob's face looked a good deal the worse for wear, his brother Joe was even more badly off. Whatever other plans they might have on hand for the discomfort of Sol and his friends would be compelled to wait a while.

That very day the latter arranged to have new locks put on their desks, and they would not be so easily opened the next time a trick was up.

Where the boys got home with their birds, however, they did indeed astonish Mrs. Torrance.

"Blackbirds! I never saw such a lot before. Where did you get them, Sol?"

"Shot 'em. That is, most of 'em. The rest were scared to death by Van's big gun. You never saw such a gun as that for blackbirds."

"I should say not. Where on earth did you get it?"

"It's one his grandfather had at the battle of Bunker Hill. I was there myself and know it's the same gun. Only it's grown a little."

"Hope it won't grow any more, then. But what are we to do with the birds?"

"Why, broil some now, and potpie the rest for Sunday."

"That'll do. I didn't know you had so much sense. Only you and Pat must pick and clean them."

"All right. We'll show Van how, and then he'll know more than he did before."

And the programme so set forth was carried out elegantly well.

There may be those who would turn up their noses at broiled blackbirds, but they are poor people who have not the magnificent appetites of those three boys.

CHAPTER XVI.

THAT was a grand dinner, that "birds on toast treat," as Sol Rogers called it, but it was a trifle later than usual. That, however, was of less consequence, considering the fact that there was to be no school that afternoon.

There, indeed, came in a sort of a difficulty.

A whole afternoon and no arrangement made for doing anything in particular with it.

"Do?" asked Mrs. Porrance, in her hard, practical way. "I'll tell you one thing you can do."

"What's that?" said Sol.

"Go back to Martin with that old gun and tell him to make a new one of it. Cut off the bell-muzzle and put on a percussion lock on it. Then it'll be good for something."

So the widow knew something about guns.

The respect of her boarders for her went up several degrees. They had scarcely dreamed of such a thing, but Pat exclaimed:

"Thank, ma'am, I'll do that same."

"Do it," she said. "And Van, you take back that carbine. It'll never be of any use. A ball from it would knock a squirrel all to bits."

The boys looked at one another and thought of the fate of the poor chipmunk, but they said nothing about him.

After dinner they made the best of their way to old Martin's, skillfully dodging the curious questioners who beset them on their way.

"After it?" said the old man. "Of course I can. Ba.. it'll cost you two or three dollars. What put that into your head?"

"Mrs. Porrance," replied Pat. "And I'll pay that much. Only so you make a good gun of it for me."

"It's mighty little that old woman don't know," muttered Martin, as he turned the old gun over in his hand. "But you'll all know her better before Spring comes."

"You know her?" asked Van.

"Known her ever since she was knee-high. She had her own way pretty much when she was young, and she's had it, on an average, ever since. Tell you what, my young friend, I'll make a gun out of that. How many blackbirds did you say you killed?"

"Over a hundred. Didn't count, exactly. Two shots apiece. Mine were double," replied Sol.

"Well, allowing for lying, there must have been a good many."

"Lying! Ask Mrs. Porrance."

"Don't know but what I will," dryly responded Martin. "I don't mean to say it couldn't be done. I've seen something like it at a pigeon-roost."

"I've heard of them," exclaimed Van. "Oh, but wouldn't I like to see one!—if I had a good gun."

"Sure to be one somewhere in the mountains this fall. Only you'd never go so far."

"Don't know about that," said Sol, soberly. "There's no telling what I wouldn't do for my country."

"Or your dinner. Well, Pat, I'll have your new shooting-iron done some time next week. I'll put in a good sight for you. She'll shoot as well as ever, only she won't be quite so long, that's all."

"Less iron to carry, too," said Sol.

"And easier to load," said Van. "I must have a gun, but I'll wait till I hear from home."

He felt almost sure, in his own mind, that his next letter would give him a fit of the blues, but he thought of his mother, and sternly turned away his head from the tempting array of double and single barrels in old Martin's cases.

It was a "tight place" for a boy like Van to be in, and very likely his father had made a sharp guess at the truth of the matter. He had been a boy once, long ago, as most men have, only too many of them forget it. More's the pity for them, and for the boys they may happen to have under their control.

The whole afternoon could not be spent at old Martin's, nevertheless, and when Sol and his friends found themselves once more in the street they were half way at a loss what to do, until Sol's eyes fell upon a great black and white sign across the eaves of a tumble-down wooden building.

"The Bunkerville *Clarion*! Come on, boys. We've got some items for little Rickards. We'll just immortalize ourselves."

Van and Pat caught the notion and followed, but without a very clear idea of what they meant to do.

It was a dingy room enough that they climbed to, up a rickety flight of steps outside the building. It must have been made for a bedroom, but it opened now into a larger and still dirtier one, that contained the types and presses of the *Clarion*.

"Once a week," said Sol, as they went up; "and weak every time. It prints the poetry for the academy young ladies. Van, I believe you could write poetry."

"I'd rather catch pickerel."

Just then they were entering the editor's room, and there he was, the genius of Bunkerville, a thin, black-eyed, long-haired youth, who had evidently all run to brains, for he had no body worth mentioning.

"Mr. Rickards," said Sol, with the air of an old acquaintance, although he had never before spoken to him, "allow me to introduce my friend, Mr. Rivington, of New York. Mr. Patrick Nolan, also of New York. We've some interesting items for the *Clarion*."

"Items? Ah! Anything about the yellow-jackets? Bless me, yes. You are the chaps that discovered them. Now, I'd like to hear the truth of that mysterious affair."

"First, Mr. Rickards, we're a contribution for your sporting column. No names need be mentioned, but the biggest string of pickerel ever brought into Bunkerville. Caught in two hours in Blue Pond by two young gentlemen of the academy."

"Number? Weight?"

"Exactly. Put them in to suit yourself. We're not at all particular. You know the size of the last fish story. Of course we could not think of dictating to a man of your genius."

Rickards laid down his pen and looked at Sol with the air of a man who was afraid he was being made fun of; but that young gentleman solemnly went on:

"That'll do for the fish, but Mr. Nolan and myself shot one hundred and fifty blackbirds this morning without missing a shot."

"What a lie!"

"Come right down to Mrs. Porrance's, and we'll show you the birds, all but what we ate for dinner. You can say we knocked 'em over at two shots, as we did, or you can leave that out, just as you please."

"Do you mean it's true?"

Sol condescended to give the particulars of the bird business, and Mr. Rickards concluded that he could dress the story up for publication.

"Now for the murder!" exclaimed Sol, with a wide grin. "Can I rely on your secrecy?"

"Murder?"

"Yes. By Mr. Rivington, of a large spotted fox in the barnyard of Mr. Smith, the miller."

"The old curmudgeon! A spotted fox! I wish it had been a skunk."

"That's just what it was. If you don't believe it, go down there and smell."

"Hurra for that, then!" shouted the limp and diminutive editor, in a hoarse and croaking voice, as he sprang from his chair. "Won't I give the deacon a benefit? Oh, no, perhaps I won't. And then, again, perhaps I will. Now, Mister—What's—your—name?"

"Rogers—Solomon Rogers, Esquire."

"What about the yellow-jackets?"

Sol had no objection to a rehearsal of that affair, but he wound up with an assertion of his profound conviction that: "The trustees did it."

"The trustees! Are they crazy?"

"No, sir. Rickards, my dear fellow, they did it out of an old spite they have against poor little Doctor Betts. They've been feeding up that swarm of stingers all summer, if the truth were known. You print it, say way, and see how many of 'em 'll come to see you."

"I should say they would. It would make a sensation. Not a doubt of it. My young friends, I was in despair when you came in. The *Clarion* needed one column more. Needed local items. Needed something to stir up the village. I can do it now. If ever you want anything in my line come to me."

"Come and see my new breechloader," said Sol. "It's the most elegant weapon ever seen in Bunkerville."

"I'll do it."

"And say we are ready to shoot with any other pair in the country."

"I'll do it."

"But don't mention names. Make it a mystery; like the spotted fox."

"I'll do it. Good-afternoon. What an editor that boy would make!"

So thought Sol's friends as he led them down the rickety stairs to the street, but he turned, when they reached the sidewalk, to say:

"Now, boys, let's go for our books. If you and I, Van, teach Pat all the Greek and Latin we know, we'll get him out of that lower class in short order."

"Will you do it?" exclaimed Pat.

"We'll try," said Van. "You're the one 'll have the hard work."

"It's not that I'm afraid of."

And so, like good fellows as they were, they gave up any further idea of outdoor fun that day and evening, to give their associate a lift. Queer teachers they were, but Pat was no ordinary scholar, and he got ahead at a rate that surprised himself as much as it did the others.

CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. PORRANCE was a remarkable woman in more ways than one, and she was by no means likely to lose sight of her own interests in her management of her boarders, whether or not she might choose to have a personal liking for them.

The next day was Saturday, and with it came, as Sol said, "A breaking out of Porrance."

He and Van were discussing plans for the day, in their own room, from the time they woke up till the bell rang for breakfast.

That meal passed about as usual, except that Pat Nolan wore a somewhat serious face, and was silent.

After it was over he marched up-stairs behind his friends, and the first word he said after the door closed behind them, was:

"Mrs. Porrance's ponies have come."

"Are they good ones?" asked Van.

"Tip top, and as black as your hat. I'm to tend them."

"That won't be hard work. I'd like to take a hand at it. There's nothing else so nice as a horse."

"So there isn't. But that's not the whole of it."

"What then?"

"They brought a big load of corn from the farm."

"To feed 'em with? All right. It's good feed for horses."

"How is it for boys?"

"Boys? I don't know. What do you mean?"

"She says I'm to shell a pile of it to-day and take it to the mill to be ground. Did you ever shell corn?"

"No. It's for meal, I s'pose. Pancakes and johnnycake, and all that."

"Yes, all that. But what does she want of so much? The wood-pile's getting into first-rate condition. She says shelling corn is easier than splitting wood."

"Boys," interrupted Sol, in a deeply injured tone, "it's come."

"What's come?" asked Van.

"The age of corn. We had it last Winter, and we had it bad. But it didn't set in as early as this. It's an awful thing."

"Awful! "Is it?"

"You wait and see. Poor Patrick Nolan! How he will suffer! And what a time we'll all have! Corn! It's a great fruit. Anyhow, I'm glad the ponies are here to help. It's a comfort that we

won't have to eat the whole crop. Corn is plenty and cheap this year. The crop is remarkable."

"Is shelling corn hard work?" asked Pat.

"Not if you do it for fun and don't have too much of it. But I don't want to make you feel bad. I'm down in the mouth myself."

"You! Why?"

"Because we meant you to go with us to-day. Now it's all knocked on the head. Let's go out and have a look at the ponies. Come on, Van."

That Saturday, indeed, turned out the dullest kind of a day, and so did several days that followed on the heels of it. Pat Nolan began to discover that, what between the wood-pile, the corn-bin, errands, the ponies and his books, his life in Bunkerville was not likely to be an idle one.

"Troth, and if I'm only earning the half of me board now," he said to Sol and Van, "how'd I go to work to earn the whole of it?"

Mrs. Porrance had assured him that morning that "Work was good for him," and Miss Almira had added, "And you would not wish to eat the bread of idleness."

"The corn bread," Pat had muttered between his teeth, and he made up his mind to have a consultation with his friends on the subject.

"I'm to go to the mill, the day, after school and bring home the other grist. I'm takin' a bigge one with me. Corn-time is here, you may depend on that."

"You'll take the ponies?"

"Of course. Do you s'pose I'd carry the bag on me back? It's the long wagon I'll have."

"We'll join you, then. Did you know the *Clarion* was printed yesterday?"

"Was it? Does it take that long to print a paper here?"

"Once a week and weakly. Didn't I tell you? It's two days late this time, because the paper to print it on was slow in coming. We'll go for a lot of 'em while you're hitching up after school."

Rickards had indeed been in hot water about his publication that week, even after getting his "items" and setting them up, but it was not the first time such a thing had happened, and it hurt his feelings less than if he had been running a different sort of a paper.

Hot water was scarcely the word for the mess he found himself in when the *Clarion* was scattered around Bunkerville, and there was a steady run on him for extra copies all the afternoon.

"The trustees, indeed! To think of his laying the hornets at their door."

"A joke on Doctor Betts!"

"A hundred blackbirds in succession, without a miss!"

"What an awful fish story!"

"A member of Deacon Smith's own family murdered in his barnyard. Every soul that's been to the mill this week knows what he means by that. Why, it's a libel. Hope the deacon 'll take the law on him."

And that was by no means the end of the unlucky editor's offending. He had printed six different pieces of poetry, but there was no telling how many he had left out, for the *Clarion* was not a large sheet, and it "filled up" considerably with advertisements, so that there was sometimes scarcely room for the entire genius of Bunkerville.

Alas, for him, that among the slighted ones was no less a person than Miss Almira Porrance, curls and all!

That was how it came to pass, late in the afternoon, when the male and female students were lingering in squads on the academy green, and Pat Nolan was hitching up to go to the mill, and Sol and Van were hurrying back from the printing-office with their fresh literature, both Almira and her mother were too much occupied to so much as look through the windows at what might be going on out of doors.

Almira's face was deeply flushed.

"I'll never send him another. It wouldn't have taken up much more than half a column, and here he's been and printed six others and left mine out.

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It was ten times as good as any of these. He's given every one of 'em a puff, too. He's a complete idiot. Knows no more about true poetry than ma's Black ponies. And she doesn't sympathize with me. She never did. There she sits now, actually laughing."

That was only a small part of what Almira had to say, but it was true about the widow. Mrs. Porrance was laughing.

Not a trivial, commonplace, empty cackle, like that of some people, but a deep, soiseless, grim laugh, that meant something.

"Oh, those boys!" she muttered. "But that's mainly Sol's work, most likely. Didn't his mother ever tell him it was wicked to lie? Probably Rickards himself put on a little. That is, if Sol Rogers needed any help to make a big story out of a little one. There, I wonder if that isn't Pat Nolan starting for the mill. He never needs to be told twice. I declare, if those two young rascals haven't jumped in with him. Too late, now. I ought to have been looking out."

So she ought, if she meant Pat to go alone, for he was sending the ponies down the road at a pace that just suited the lively, restive little Canadians, and there was no telling what mischief might turn up before they got back.

That is, it might have been difficult but for Van Rivington.

"Look here, boys," remarked that sage young counselor, as they rattled along, "we must behave ourselves this time or we'll never be able to borrow the ponies when we want them."

"Bring 'em back safe and sound," said Sol; "but they need a little exercise. The load's nothing."

"What's a few bags of corn?" asked Pat. "Didn't I shell it?"

"And won't we have to eat it?"

It was a tiptop drive, anyhow, and, when they reached the door of the mill there was fat, red-faced old Deacon Smith standing in it, mopping his forehead with a red handkerchief.

"How d'ye do, deacon?" sung out Sol Rogers. "Is Mrs. Porrance's grist ready?"

"All ready."

"And here's another one," said Pat.

"I hope she's savin' some to pisant."

"Deacon," exclaimed Sol, as the miller came to the wagon, "would you like to look at the *Clarion*, just out?"

"I never take it, my young friend. It's a vile sheet. No respect for anybody. No news, no nothing. I don't mind looking at it while Dan's changing your grists."

And look at it he did, Sol taking care to hand it to him so that his first attention should be drawn to the "local column."

Redder and redder grew the face of the miller as his now eager eyes hurried along the libelous lines of the *Clarion*.

"Murdered! A member of my own family! Oh, how I wish I knew who shot that skunk! I'll bet a thousand dollars it was Rickards himself. The scoundrel! Why, boys, you can smell it now. It's been perfectly dreadful. There's a ton of hay in that barn that'll never get over it."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Sol; but Van Rivington's face wore even a more serious look.

"Mr. Smith," suggested Pat Nolan, "I thought that kind of a baste was bad for poultry?"

"So they are. Kill lots of 'em."

"Then why wasn't it a good thing for ye to get rid of him?"

"So it would be in any other way. And now I'm to be laughed at in the papers about it. Oh, if I don't get even with him!"

"Deacon Smith," said Sol, "do you want to know how to shut up Rickards?"

"Well, how?"

"Subscribe for the *Clarion* and put in an advertisement of your mill. He'd puff you blue and gold."

"Subscribe for it? Have it come to my house?"

"Poetry in it, deacon. Lots of good things. Maybe I'll write for it myself now and then."

"You? You young vagabond!"

"Be careful, deacon; I've some tame skunks at home. What if I should turn 'em all loose in your barnyard?"

"Don't talk back——"

"No, deacon, no. I never talk back. I don't know what I might do if I were old and fat and red-faced and bald-headed, and so mean I wouldn't let the boys go a-swimming in my millpond."

The miller was a great man in his own opinion, and he could scarcely believe his ears. A mere boy, to chaff him in such a fashion!

But Dan, his broad-backed helper, had tumbled a couple of heavy bags of meal into the wagon. After four sacks of Indian corn had been duly landed on the ground beside it, Pat Nolan, who had never loosened his hold on the reins of his ponies, now suddenly gave them a startling chirrup.

"You scamp! If I had my hands on you!"

"No, Deacon Smith," said Sol, calmly, "your little hands were never made for that. Better sit down and enjoy your *Clarion*. It's a good paper and looks out for the neighborhood news. I'll tell Mr. Rickards you sent him your love. He'll send you the *Clarion*, regularly. Price two dollars a year. Printed once a week if nothing happens. Good-by."

Even Van and Pat were learning something new about their friend as they listened.

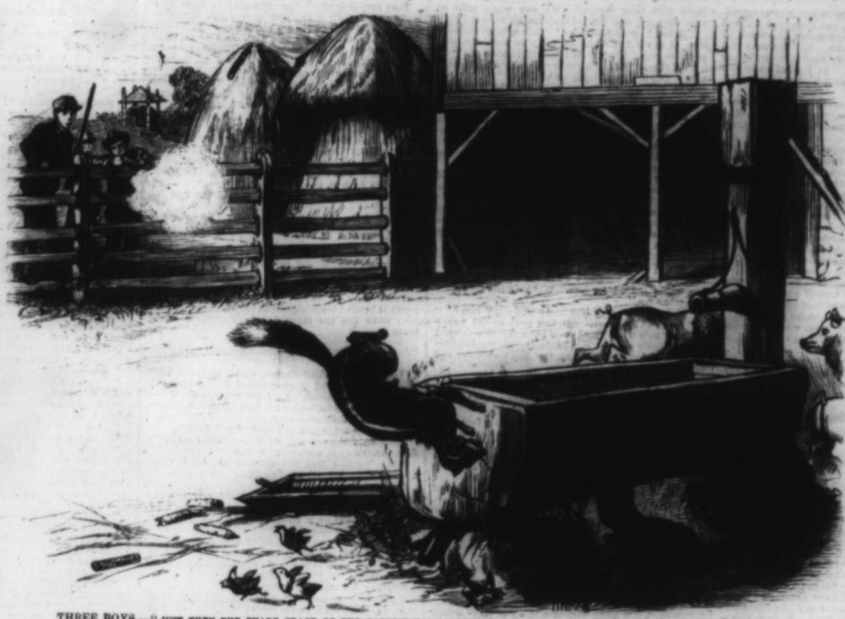
"There's mischief in him," thought Van.

"Sure, and he's sale to get the two of us into scrapes enough, if we let him," chuckled Pat to himself. And it may be neither of them thought any the less of Sol on that account.

The drive home was a lively one, but they carefully bore in mind Van Rivington's caution, and Mrs. Porrance only nodded her grizzled head approvingly, as the ponies were wheeled in perfect safety through the wide gate, and down the lane toward the barn, stopping to deliver the meal-bags opposite the kitchen door.

[To be continued.]

"Three Boys" was commenced in No. 814.



THREE BOYS.—"JUST THEN THE SHARP CRACK OF THE CARBINE RANG THROUGH THE BARNYARD, AND THE 'SPOTTED FOX' ROLLED OFF FROM THE TROUGH, IN TOKEN OF THE ACCURACY OF VAN'S AIM."—SEE PAGE 215.

Distinguished Scholars of Jersey City (N. J.) Schools.

GEORGE E. FRENCH,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 12, CRESCENT AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

GEORGE E. FRENCH is a distinguished pupil of the second grammar class of Grammar School No. 12, Crescent Avenue, Jersey City, N. J. A very careful selection was made from the classes of this school, as the number of competent pupils was large, and hence each one chosen and presented here is to be regarded as specially prominent for both excellence in study and good behavior. George E. French is the son of James C. and Annie M. French, and was born April 30th, 1864, making him fifteen years of age. When six years old he commenced attending school in Chicago, Ill., where he remained for several years. Next he was a pupil in No. 15, in Brooklyn, N. Y., and later in No. 32, in New York. He finally entered No. 12 in Jersey City, in the fourth grammar class, and he is now in the second, making a high per centage in all the studies. He is a tall, erect and self-possessed youth. His face is full, with clear eyes with an intelligent expression. His teachers find that he has a great deal of solidity of character. He not only studies well, but he is a sensible reasoner upon all the matters of daily life. Strong in his principles, and eager in the pursuit of knowledge, he is advancing to manhood with that combined moral and intellectual strength which is most likely to give him influence hereafter.

ROBERT V. LAWLESS,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 12, CRESCENT AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

ROBERT V. LAWLESS is a youth who stands on the records of the first grammar class of Grammar School No. 12, Crescent Avenue, Jersey City, N. J., with the high per centage of one hundred per cent. All who study know the difficulty of reaching this position, and that it can be reached and maintained only by intelligence combined with strict application. Lawless was born in Jersey City, December 14th, 1865, making him in his fourteenth year. He is the son of Michael and Rebecca Lawless. He commenced going to a private school when about six years old, and later entered the Primary Department of No. 4. In his present school he was advanced from the third class in the Primary Department to the first in the Grammar, skipping one of the grammar classes. He has both intelligence and energy. He is reflective, sensible and ambitious. When you ask him a question he answers promptly and in well-chosen words. Whatever he learns he fully comprehends, and he can talk on the subject with more freedom than is usual in pupils of the same age. He has regular features, small eyes, and a high forehead. He is now a bright and energetic scholar, with such a record behind him that it gives positive assurance of a brilliant one before him.

THE FLOODS AT SZEGEDIN.

IT is difficult for any but those who have actually witnessed such a calamity to form an adequate conception of the dreadful nature or the extent of the terrible disaster which recently happened in Hungary. Szegedin, the capital of Csongrád, is situated on a marshy plain, and was divided into the town proper, and the upper and lower suburbs.

There were numerous churches, convents, schools and hospitals, a theatre, and an old Turkish fortress. The population numbered about 75,000, and it was a busy and prosperous commercial city. Standing upon ground below the general level of the rivers Theiss and Maros, it was only protected from inundation by a series of dikes or embankments, which frequently gave way when the rivers were swollen by melted snows from the mountains, or by heavy rains. There were three of these dikes—the first, which was some twelve miles from the city, gave way on the 4th of March; the second collapsed some days afterwards, in spite of the constant efforts of the people to maintain it, but on Sunday, the 9th, there was some abatement of the flood, and it was hoped that the danger was over. On the following Tuesday, however, a gale sprang up and drove the water furiously against the dike, rendering the work of repairing it so dangerous that the laborers were only kept to it by the military. By midnight the soldiers themselves saw that further effort was in vain. The general in command gave the word to abandon the work, and the order was announced in the city by the ringing of bells and the firing of guns. The waters, no longer resisted, leaped through and over the last embankment, and in an hour and a half the whole town was submerged. The destruction was instant and enormous. Most of the poorer houses, being built of sun-dried bricks, melted away at the first touch of the inundation, and out of the 3,700 houses about 1,200 were destroyed. Barges, boats and steam-vessels were at once employed to rescue those who still clung to the ruins of their houses, or who had taken refuge in the upper branches of trees, or upon the few high places which still remained above water. At least 74,000 persons were made homeless and completely ruined, and the loss of life was very great.

ROY, THE RANGER.

A Tale of the Mexican War

CHAPTER XII.

SPANISH BAYONETS.

ROY BELLINGHAM and Tom Meade reached Point Isabel in safety, having crossed the

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prairie, in the dark hours of the early morning, without encountering any of the enemy's lancers.

Great was Captain Walker's joy when he beheld them.

"I had given you up for lost," he said. "How did you escape?"

Roy described their adventure to him, and he was much surprised by the narration.

"Well, you were in luck that time!" he cried, when Roy had finished. "I never expected to see you again. The men under your command broke and scattered like a flock of frightened sheep. It was a disgraceful affair! I knew it wasn't your fault, though. I succeeded in keeping my men together, and we fell back orderly. The lancers charged us full tilt, and we emptied about thirty saddles for them in the running fight that followed, and they chased us clear to the Point before they gave us up."

"It was rough work," said Roy.

"Tough, my boy, tough! I'm not in the habit of being whipped by these Mexicans, and this defeat don't set well on my mind. Major Monroe is very much annoyed to think that we did not succeed in reaching Fort Brown. He thinks that the Fort is besieged, and that General Taylor is hemmed in by an overwhelming force. But I told him that I would find out for him, for I'm going to try it again."

"Good!" exclaimed Roy. "That's my idea exactly. How large a force will you take with you on the next attempt?"

"Five men."

Roy and Toss looked surprised.

"Five! Is that all?" they questioned.

"All I want. We can't fight our way through, as you saw, and so we must get through by stratagem. More men would only be in the way. A half a dozen of us might slip through the enemy's lines unperceived. I told the major that if I could get five volunteers to go with me, I'd try it."

"I'll go, for one!" cried Roy, quickly.

"And I, for another!" cried Toss.

"Of course you will; now we only want three more. We'll get the best mount we can find in the camp, and start to-night."

"A good idea," replied Roy. "We can reach the chaparral by morning, and I can show you a bridle-path in the farmhouse where these bandits have their headquarters."

"You want to have a brush with them?"

"Yes; I would like to liberate Mrs. Bellingham," replied Roy.

"Certainly. We'll take the farmhouse in the chaparral on the way. Come now, and we'll have a talk with the major about the expedition."

"All right; and after that Toss and I will take a nap to make up for the sleep we lost last night."

They went to the major's quarters, and the old veteran greeted the young rangers very cordially. He slapped Roy upon the shoulder in a paternal fashion, crying out:

"So, my young Hector, here you are again, safe and sound! That's more than I expected. I thought you were wounded and taken prisoner, if not killed outright."

Roy laughed.

"No, major; Toss and I got out of the scrape, and here we are ready to try it again," he said.

"Eh! How's that?" cried the major.

"We're ready for another start," answered Walker.

"Eh! eh! But I can't spare you men enough to fight your way through."

"I'm going to get through without fighting much."

The major looked surprised.

"Eh! eh! how will you do that?" he questioned.

Captain Walker explained his plan, and the major shook his head gravely.

ROY, THE RANGER.—"'HERE IS THE SAFE CONDUCT OF THE PADRE JARANTA, THAT I SPOKE OF BEFORE,' SHE SAID. 'TAKE IT—IT MAY PROVE SERVICEABLE TO YOU IN SOME MOMENT OF PERIL.'"

"It's little short of madness to make the attempt," he said. "I don't believe you can get through."

"There's no harm in trying, major," suggested Roy. "You can never tell what you can do until you try, you know."

"That's so. It's an old saying, but a true one. Well, well, try it, my boys, try it. The object to be gained is of the greatest importance. I'm afraid you'll only be risking your lives, though; but then that's what the soldiers are here for. Try it—try it—you can but fail, and to succeed will be a fine feather in your caps."

"If we keep on the way we're going we'll have a cap stuck full of feathers," observed Toss Meade, in his usual dry way.

"Well, you'll be lucky if you don't get stuck full of something else," responded the major.

They joined in a merry laugh, and the rangers withdrew.

"Now, let's have a square meal, and then for a snooze," cried Toss Meade, when they reached their own quarters.

Roy seconded this proposal heartily, and whilst he and Toss proceeded to carry it out, Captain Walker went to look up the three volunteers that were required to make their number complete, and to prepare the horses and other equipments for the expedition.

At ten o'clock Roy and Toss were aroused from their slumbers by Captain Walker, and informed that everything was ready for their departure.

They carefully examined their arms, looked to their supply of ammunition, mounted their horses, and rode quietly past the pickets into the wide prairie.

This level plain was wrapped in gloom. There was no moon that night, and though the stars were shining they cast little light down upon the prairie. A gentle breeze swept across the plain and toyed with the wavy masses of Roy's long hair.

"A nice night for our purpose," he said to Captain Walker, as they rode side by side.

They were riding in couples, Walker and Roy being in advance; and the captain had instructed them to keep well together.

"Splendid! couldn't be better," the captain responded to Roy's remark. "I think we shall be able to reach the chaparral without discovery. But, I say, how strong do you think this Romano Falcon's band is?"

"Fifty, more or less."

"Phew! my boy, you don't think we could whip them with this force?"

"I do. They are a cowardly set, and if we can take them by surprise we can scatter them like sheep."

Walker laughed, but his mirth had a somewhat dubious sound.

"These 'ifs' work both ways, and as often the wrong way as the right, my boy," he replied. "Catch a weasel asleep! You've heard the saying. This Falcon is a weasel. It will be very difficult to surprise him, I'm thinking."

Roy felt that Walker was right.

"True," he admitted; "but if we should make a bold charge upon these bandits they would scatter without stopping to count our numbers, and then we should effect Mrs. Bellingham's release. Isn't it worth trying?"

Walker shook his head doubtfully.

"Ah, my boy, well do you deserve the appellation of 'Reckless,'" he answered. "But, from what you have told me, Falcon's band is largely composed of deserters from our army, and they would fight like hungry wolves if cornered. If his men were all Mexicans, now, we could easily stampede them."

"I don't think these deserters would fight if they could avoid it. Their object is plunder. I think they would retreat from the house at our advance."

"So they might, and then lie in ambush for us, surround us, and then where would we be? We might fight our way through, but some of our party would be missing sure when we got out of it. No, no, Roy, it's too risky a job for us to undertake with our present force."

Roy could not conceal his disappointment at these words.

"Must I leave Zelia—my stepmother—in the hands of these ruffians?" he cried.

"I see no help for it at present," replied Walker. "Control your feelings, my boy. It's hard, I know, but we are on an important mission, and we must attend to that first. If this bandit, Falcon, had only a dozen men at his back I wouldn't mind taking a dash at him, but fifty is rather too strong odds, my boy—altogether too strong."

"You may be right, captain," Roy admitted, reluctantly.

"Of course I am. Our best plan is to avoid this chaparral and push straight on to Fort Brown. When we reach there we can get a reinforcement—a company of May's cavalry, for instance, and then we can go for these bandits."

"And what may not Mrs. Bellingham suffer during this delay?"

"Oh! they will not harm her; they will be too anxious to get the ransom she promised them."

"Yes, yes! and those men promised me to watch over her safety," cried Roy, thoughtfully; "and I think they will. They were very friendly toward me."

"Why?" demanded Walker, curiously.

"It's too long a story to tell you now, captain."

"Then never mind it, for we have no time for long stories now, as you say," responded Walker, laughingly.

"Suffice it to say they knew my father years ago, and they also knew my Uncle Onslow. I think they will protect Zelia from insult or injury; but I wish to Heaven she had staid at home and not come wandering out in this country!" he added, bluntly.

"Why did she come?"

"'Twas a question that Roy had no desire to answer.

He would not explain Zelia's motive even to this tried friend. He respected Zelia too much to betray her folly, though in his own mind he condemned it.

"There were some family reasons for it," he answered, evasively. "In fact, she was seeking me when she was captured, and as she got into trouble on my account, I am naturally anxious to get her out of it."

"Of course, that is but natural, as you say; but we'll have to leave her where she is until we have carried Major Monroe's message to General Taylor."

"I suppose so," replied Roy, resignedly.

He always accepted the inevitable without a murmur, for, with all his impetuosity and recklessness, he was not deficient in good, strong sense.

This ended the discussion on that subject between them, and as they ended it they put their horses to a swifter speed, and this rendered conversation irksome.

For three hours they rode at this rapid pace, and their progress across the prairie was unimpeded. Neither lancer no bandit appeared to bar their way.

Suddenly Roy's keen eyes detected something suspicious in the gloom before them.

He gave a warning signal to Walker, and both reined in their steeds.

"What is it, Roy?" inquired the captain.

"See! on the prairie there—directly in front of us," answered Roy, "there are two shadowy forms."

"Men?"

"They appear to be so, and with guns."

"On foot?"

"Yes."

"They must be sentinels."

"Do you see them?"

"Yes; but very indistinctly. Your sight is better than mine."

The rest of the party now rode up.

"What is it? Anything ahead?" inquired Toss Meade.

"Yes; look!"

"Jehoshaphat! there's two of them!"

THE GREAT FLOOD AT SEGUEDIN.—THE INHABITANTS RETREATING TO THE LAST EMBANKMENT.

THE GREAT FLOOD AT SEGUEDIN.—THE TOWN HALL AT SEGUEDIN DURING THE INUNDATIONS.

"Yes."

"But what are they?"

"Sentinels, I should say. Don't you see something projecting that looks like the bayonet of a gun?"

"Yes; but why don't they challenge us?"

"Perhaps they don't see us."

"Likely; but they will if we go any nearer. What's to be done?"

It was Toss who put this question, and Captain Walker shared in his perplexity.

"I don't understand it at all," he said. "What are these two fellows doing out here alone on the prairie? There is no camp fire, no signs of horses picketed. I'm puzzled!"

Toss unslung his carbine from his back.

"Let's pop them over!" he cried; "and if there's any more of them lying loose around here we'll soon hear from them."

Toss cocked the carbine.

"Hold up!" commanded Walker. "That's just what we don't want. You might bring a hornet's nest about your ears. There may be a whole regiment concealed in the grass back of those two. Do you see any timber beyond, Roy?" he added, appealing to him on account of the well-known keenness of his vision.

"I see a dark line, but whether it is a chaparral or merely a bank of low-lying clouds is more than I can say," replied Roy.

"If we could only surprise and capture these two fellows now, Roy, let's stalk them?"

"We will!" answered Roy, promptly.

"Here, hold our horses and carbines," Walker said. "Our pistols and sabres will be sufficient, Roy; and we don't want to fire a pistol if we can help it. We must creep like snakes through the grass and come upon them unawares."

"I think the sabres will be in the way," answered Roy; "the scabbards might clatter. I had rather trust to my knife."

"You are right; we'll leave the sabres behind. They are a serviceable weapon on horseback in a charge, where there's a chance to cut and slash, but when it comes to close quarters a knife is better, as you say."

They unbuckled their swords and gave them in charge of their comrade.

Toss was directed to remain in that spot, holding their horses in readiness in case of any discovery that they should make compelling them to return in a hurry, and not to advance until signaled to do so.

Armed only with bowie knife and pistol, Walker and Roy crept through the prairie-grass in the direction of the supposed sentinels. They used every precaution, and their progress was slow and tedious.

In this manner they proceeded some distance, pausing every little while to raise their heads and take a survey.

"Captain!" cried Roy, suddenly, after taking a keen glance at the objects they were approaching, "those are not men!"

"Not men?" rejoined Walker, surprisedly.

"No. They are too tall for men; and see what bushy heads they've got. They look like stumps to me, with spike-like branches."

Walker sprang to his feet with alacrity, and Roy followed his example.

"I know what they are. They are trees."

"Trees?"

"Yes; the 'Spanish Bayonet' as it is called. Yucca, I think, is the right name of it. What a dunce I was not to have thought of that before! They are often found growing singly on the prairies. Come along."

Walker hurried swiftly toward these strange objects, and Roy followed him.

They paused beside one of them—the two were growing some dozen paces apart, and Roy surveyed them curiously.

"What singular trees!" he exclaimed.

Walker was right. These two trees were a species of palm, with long, slender leaves, each pointed with a thorn, growing in a cluster from its top, presenting a bushy, bristling appearance, and giving them the name of "Spanish Bayonet," from the supposed resemblance of the leaves to that weapon.

Walker saluted in a quiet laugh, and then gave the signal for Toss and the others to advance.

"Have you captured them?" cried Toss, as he rode up.

"Yes; here they are!"

Walker pointed to the trees.

"Here they are," he repeated.

Toss looked at them with a ludicrous expression of countenance.

"What in thunder's them?" he cried. "Scarecrows?"

"They scared us, though they were not crows. Those are Spanish Bayonet trees."

"Jumping Jehoshaphat! sold, and got the money! Whoever saw a tree before with a top like a frizzled wig!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A STRANGE MEETING.

THE other rangers laughed at this expression of Toss Meade's astonishment.

"I have seen them often enough before," said one of them, an old campaigner. "I have known pickets to fire at them in the night, mistaking them for men, and receiving no answer to their challenge, whilst the tree appeared to be advancing upon them. Many a raw recruit has got scared by them."

"And no wonder, for they bothered us!" cried Walker. "But let's get on. It can't be far from morning, now, and I want to reach the chaparral before the day breaks."

He and Roy resumed their carbines and swords, and mounted their horses again, and the march forward was continued in the same order as before.

As I have neglected to describe the equipment of the rangers, I will here supply the deficiency.

They were literally "armed to the teeth," as befitted the nature of their desperate enterprise—for their attempt to reach Fort Brown could only be regarded in the light of a "forlorn hope."

Each man of the six was armed with a carbine, a brace of pistols, a sabre, and a bowie-knife; and thus provided, they were capable of making a gallant resistance against greatly superior numbers.

It was understood between them that they were to go forward through all hazards and obstacles. They were to press on while one of the party was left alive, and the survivors, or survivor, if but one should survive, must bear the message to General Taylor.

There was not a man in that small band that thought of turning back, or who would have shrunk from an encounter with a whole regiment of lancers if it had suddenly appeared before them.

Day was just breaking as they approached the chaparral. The rosy light of morn gilded the prairie with strange beauty, and the air was fresh and balmy. It was cheering and refreshing to the rangers after their long ride through the gloom of the night.

Captain Walker was greatly pleased on reaching the chaparral.

"We can skirt its edge for the rest of the way," he told Roy. "If we stumble on any of the enemy's lancers, and we are likely to now, the wood will serve us for a retreat. We can ride in among the trees, dismount, give them a volley or two, and when they get sick of it and wheel off, we can remount and go on again."

"Don't you think it would be a good idea to try and penetrate through the chaparral?" suggested Roy. "By so doing we shall avoid the chance of meeting any of the lancers altogether."

Walker shook his head doubtfully.

"The idea is good enough if we could only carry it out, Roy," he made answer. "There are several disadvantages to the plan, however. In the first place, we don't know the way through the wood, and we might get lost in it, and wander about for a day or so before we could find our way out; then, again, we might meet with Romano Falcon's band, and find him a more troublesome customer to deal with than the lancers. No, no, all things considered, I think it is best to keep on the way we are going, and trust to luck to get through."

"I guess you are right," replied Roy. "We shall get along faster in the open prairie, and the chaparral will serve as a place of refuge in case of danger."

They were within a stone's-throw of the chaparral, when a monk, mounted on a sleek mule, emerged from the trees and rode toward them.

"Hollo! who's coming?" cried Walker, as these objects broke upon his vision.

"It is a priest!" returned Roy.

"Lord, yes, they are thicker in this country than Quakers in Pennsylvania. That fellow must have come from Matamoras. We must halt him. He may give us some important information."

"He appears desirous of speaking with us, for he is riding straight toward us."

"So he is. Halt, men! We must be cautious; there may be some treachery here. For all we know, the bandits may be concealed in yonder thicket, waiting for a chance to surprise us."

"This monk's purpose is friendly," said Roy.

"What makes you think so?" demanded Walker, surprisedly.

"The manner of his approach."

"Hum! there's no telling—but we shall soon know. Here he comes."

The rangers had halted at Walker's command, and all eyes were bent curiously upon the dark-robed figure of the monk, as his sleek mule ambled toward them.

The mule was a small animal, but it was a handsome beast, with graceful proportions and a glossy hide. He seemed just the animal for a priest to ride—gentle, docile and intelligent.

The monk was also small in size, though his disguising garb revealed little of his figure, and nothing of his face for the cowl of his frock was drawn over his head, and utterly concealed his visage.

But he sat his steed with an ease and skill that the rangers, all good horsemen, could not fail to remark.

"He rides well," said Captain Walker. "As a general thing, these monks bob up and down in their saddles, reminding one of a lot of jelly in a black bag. This monk, however, hasn't got the stomach on him that these worthies generally carry. He's quite small."

"Yes," answered Roy, thoughtfully.

"What are you thinking about?" cried Walker, observing his abstraction.

"I have an idea that this monk bears a message to me."

"Ah! I see! From the bandits?"

"Yes."

"It would not surprise me if he did."

The monk checked his mule when he was within twenty feet of them; but he did not offer to raise the cowl from his face.

"Roy Bellingham, I would speak with you," he called out, in a clear and musical voice.

Roy started as these well-known tones fell upon his ear.

"You were right, Roy," said Walker.

"Yes," answered Roy; "right and wrong. What mystery is this? Why should she be here, and in that garb?"

He urged his horse toward the monk, leaving Captain Walker very much bewildered by his words.

The monk turned his mule as Roy rode up to him, so as to bring his back to the rangers.

"Zelia!" cried Roy.

She put back her cowl, so as partly to expose her face, and then extended her right hand toward him.

"Yes, Roy, it is I!" she answered, sweetly. "Are you glad to see me?"

The bright blue eyes shot an expressive glance into his.

"Can you doubt it?" answered Roy.

This reply, though rather non-committal, was very satisfactory to her, and her beaming face showed the satisfaction of her mind.

"You were coming in search of me, to rescue me?" she cried, eagerly.

"Yes," replied Roy; deeming it as well to leave her in that thought, without explaining the course that Captain Walker had persuaded him to adopt.

Zelia cast a doubtful glance over her shoulder at Roy's five companions.

"And did you hope to accomplish it with so small a force as that?" she continued.

"Why not?"

"What madness! Ah! Roy, Roy, you are as reckless as ever!"

But her manner denoted more admiration than reproof of his recklessness.

"You are free without my aid, it appears," returned Roy, with a smile.

"Yes, I am free—in safety—danger no longer threatens me."

"Did the ransom arrive?"

"I had the ransom with me," she answered, with a bewildering smile.

Roy looked surprised.

"Jewels?" he cried.

"No; I found friends amongst the band," she returned, evasively.

"But those two men? They were faithful to their promises to me."

"Yes; and, you see, you saved me, Roy, after all."

"Do you know those men?" he cried, with sudden thought.

She saw what was passing in his mind with her usual keenness; but a conversation with Hartnett, while they were drinking wine together on the previous night, had convinced her that he was ignorant of her complicity in Onslow Bellingham's guilt. Her mind was now easy on that score; the fears that had oppressed it were at rest.

"I never met them until yesterday," she replied. "I only knew them as Tomaso and Edwardo. Their service to me is entirely owing to your influence with them. You knew them in the States, did you not, Roy?"

"No; they are as much strangers to me as to yourself."

"Then why do they take such an interest in you?" She put this question carelessly, but she watched Roy's face keenly as she did so.

He hesitated in replying. He was loth to tell her what a villain her second husband had been.

"It appears that they knew my father years ago," he answered, slowly. "They professed friendship for me on that account."

"They have told him nothing that affects me," Zelia reflected with satisfaction.

They were both silent for a few moments, busy with their thoughts.

"Then Romano Falcon has released you?" resumed Roy.

"Falcon is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes; he was killed last night."

"Who killed him?" cried Roy, surprisedly.

It was on the tip of her tongue to tell him, but she checked the action, thinking that Roy might consider it more unwomanly than heroic.

"He fell in a duel," she replied.

"A duel! That's singular! Why should he fight a duel, and with whom?"

"With one whom he had enraged to madness," she answered, evasively. "They fought, and he was slain—there let him rest. Tomaso is now captain of the band."

"Ha! Hartnett! And he set you free?"

"Yes."

"Where are you going?"

"With you. I adopted this disguise to avoid observation. Was it not a good idea?"

"Undoubtedly. But I do not see how you can go with us," he added, with a puzzled expression upon his face.

"Why not?" she demanded, in surprise.

"Because we are on an errand of danger."

"The danger is over. You have found me; what have you to do but return?"

"We are on our way to Fort Brown, with intelligence for General Taylor."

"I thought you were in search of me?" she questioned, and a wrinkle of displeasure appeared between her eyes.

"That was one object of our expedition," replied Roy, with his usual frankness; "but the other, and principal one, was to open communication with General Taylor."

She bit her lip vexedly.

"Oh! then I was only a secondary consideration?" she exclaimed.

"Tomaso shall accompany you to Point Isabel," returned Roy, ignoring the question.

"I can find my way there without the aid of your friend Toss, if I chose to go, which I do not just at present," she cried, petulantly. "Rash boy! I am safer in this country than you are. I have an escort sixty determined men in yonder chaparral."

"Falcon's bandits?"

"They are my bandits now, for Tomaso commands them, and *I* command *him*!" she answered, proudly.

He gazed amazedly at her flushed face. She was very handsome, then, if he could only think so; but it was not the beauty of her face, but her words that occupied his thoughts.

"How can that be?" he questioned.

"By the tree of gold—the idol that men worship so dearly. Search the world's history, Roy, and you will find that gold has ever controlled steel. You look amazed. Ah! a woman's wit is often superior to man's strength! Had I not been here you would have been captured by these bandits, as you were before. You could never have passed this wood. Their spies descried you when you were approaching over the prairie. How, then, do you ever expect to reach Fort Brown?"

"We will reach there or die!" answered Roy, simply.

"Oh! you will never be content until you are killed!" she cried, reproachfully. Then a new thought enters her brain. "It is a sense of honor or glory—the soldier's phantoms—that urges you on."

"It is a sense of duty! but there will be both honor and glory if we succeed."

"Then you shall succeed; and you shall owe your success to me."

Roy smiled.

"You doubt my power? You shall have proof of it! I will watch over you and protect you in spite of yourself. I will furnish you with a guide and a safe-conduct."

"Oh! you are not in your senses!"

Zelia laughed outright at his astonishment. Then she drew a folded paper from the dress of her monkish frock.

"Here is the safe conduct of the Padre Jaranta, that I spoke of before," she said. "Take it—it may prove serviceable to you in some moment of peril. These Mexicans all respect the good padre, and his influence is great among the roving rancheros, or guerrillas."

She thrust it into his hand, pressing that hand warmly as she did so.

"Farewell! We will meet again in Matamoras, where I shall find you a prisoner. Enter the chaparral by the path I take, in five minutes; you will find the guide awaiting you."

So saying, she touched the mule with the spur, cantered back to the chaparral, and disappeared among the trees.

Roy sat upon his steed like a statue on horseback, gazing after her in blank amazement.

Captain Walker rode up to him.

"Hollon, Roy! What did the monk have to say to you?" he cried.

The hearty tones of the captain's voice aroused Roy from his trance of excitement.

"She's a wonderful woman!" he exclaimed.

"The monk a woman! the dence you say?"

"Yes, captain. Let me astonish you. I have been considerably astonished myself, and I think I can astonish you a little."

"What about?"

"I'll tell you."

Roy briefly recounted his strange interview with Zelia, and the astonishment of Walker was unbounded as he listened to him.

"Well, this just beats all!" he cried. "She's a widow, you say? Really, I must look after her. I should say she was just the article for a soldier's wife."

"A little too much, I think!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Perhaps so. But if you can get a guide through this chaparral, with the understanding that the bandits will not trouble us, we're in luck, and I, for one, will thank Mrs. Bellingham heartily for such good service."

"The guide will be there, I'm confident."

"All right. Come on, boys. Forward!"

They rode briskly toward the opening in the chaparral that appeared to be the bridle-path.

Roy took the lead here, as they were obliged to go in single file. They soon came to a wider place—a kind of glade. Here they found a mounted Mexican awaiting them.

(To be continued.)

"Roy the Ranger" was commenced in No. 651.

SWIMMING.

TRAINING FOR SWIMMING RACES.

TRAINING for swimming races is quite as necessary as for any other athletic contest, and for want of proper attention many amateurs have lost races entirely through not paying proper attention to their course of training. One great and frequent mistake in training for swimming races is for all people to go through exactly the same course, as where sweating is absolutely necessary for one man there are a great many that do not require to reduce themselves at all. In swimming a race the chief requisite is good wind. This necessary for good natators is very different from that required for any other exercise, as on plunging into cold water the exercise of swimming produces an oppression on the chest which, if you are not in good condition, you cannot get rid of without stopping and treading water; this attack feels like a lump of lead on the chest, and has been the cause of many failing to gain a race they were otherwise quite capable of winning.

The underestimated instructions will be found of great assistance to those who may wish to go through a course of training: Firstly, the stomach should be kept in thorough good order, and, if not so, should be treated to a course of mild aperients, and if of bilious temperament, a more vigorous treatment must be adopted; "of course only those of thorough good constitution should attempt to enter for races," and when in thorough good order, a system of training, such as is given below, must be followed. Get up before six o'clock in the morning, eat a small dry biscuit, and drink a small cup of cold beef tea; then start for a smart walk for a short distance, to settle the biscuit and beef tea; next commence a running exercise for several miles, starting with a short distance. After about two hours of this exercise, go to a swimming bath or river, taking the greatest care that no chill is taken, nor that you get cool before entering the water, as the bath is intended more as a refresher than a swimming exercise, and only remain in the water for two or three minutes; on coming out some one should give you a good rubbing with a coarse towel.

By this time you will be in good condition to enjoy your breakfast. This should consist of cold tea, or barley water, without sugar or milk, a small chop without the fat, or a steak underdone, with graham bread.

After breakfast take a quiet walk for two or three hours, then commence the swimming exercise. The distance to go over in the practice should be in proportion to the distance to be swum in the race; for instance, if you are going to swim a thousand yards, you should commence by swimming a quarter of that distance, and then increase it each morning for a week; by that time you will have completed the thousand yards. As this course of training would last for three weeks or a month, it is best, after the first week, to swim the distance every other day for the second week, and half the distance on each intervening day. During the last week the whole course should be done every day, except that just before the day of the race, which should be kept as a day of rest, not of absolute cessation from all exercise, but moderately quiet.

The dinner should be similar to the breakfast; beef-tea instead of cold tea. All vegetables should be avoided, with the one exception of potatoes, and these should only be taken in small quantities. Pork, veal, ham, and any young meats should never be taken; also oysters, eggs, cheese, broths, soups, pies, and puddings, seasonings and fruits must be avoided. A glass of port wine after dinner will do no harm; but any hot beverage, in the form of spirit or negus, must not be thought of, and the less one drinks the better. Smoking is also to be avoided.

After dinner, half an hour's sleep should be taken; and then the refresher of the afternoon should be spent in some light exercise, as rowing, or gymnastics, or, where obtainable, horse exercise. After tea, another long walk should be taken, or a steady run; in running, if you suffer from any pain, the part affected must be well rubbed.

If, at the end of the first week's training on this system, the superfluous fat is not reduced, a few Turkish baths would be advisable, but only sufficient to reduce the superabundance of fat. Of course this treatment only applies to those men who are inclined to corpulency; whereas those men whose animal life is low should be subjected to just the contrary treatment, so as to increase the amount of blood in them.

To discover if the system of training is correct, the man under regimen must be watched to see if he appears in good health and spirits; and if he gradually increases in strength and wind, there is but little fear of failure; if, on the contrary, he is easily blown, or his spirits are low, or if he shows any sign of physical derangement, the system of training must be changed, and persevered in till all the symptoms disappear.

In many cases the joints become stiff from overexertion in some part of the exercises necessary to proper training, or, may be, from some local weakness; this may be treated by rubbing the part affected with a liniment of horsedrop and oil, or any other similar preparation.

When the course of training is completed, and the man is in good condition, the skin should be smooth, well colored, and elastic, the flesh firm, and the spirits good. There should be a general feeling of lightness and activity. A very good test of proper condition is to run about a mile at top speed; if this can be done without getting blown at all and without producing a pain in the side, it is a moderately good proof that the course of training has been successful. If a man is engaged in business, and cannot devote his time to a strict course of training, the morning should be set apart for the walking and running exercises, and the evening to swimming, taking care to retire to bed not later than nine o'clock. Of course business will not prevent a course of diet according to the specified regulations; and if the body is in a thoroughly healthy state there need be no fear of the swimmer's terrible bane, "cramp," in ever so long a day's work in the water, as it is nearly always the result of a bad state of health or an overloaded stomach.

HONESTY THE BEST POLICY.

IT was odd, very odd; reckon it up this way or that way, or in whatever way I might, the result was just the same—I had two pounds more than I could account for. I went over the whole quarter's receipts again, to see if something had not been omitted, but everything was quite right.

"Ha! what's that? It looks like a scratching out; and yet it can't be, for I never use a penknife."

So I held the leaf up to the light and scanned it closely, and then, turning it over, scrutinised it again.

"It certainly does look very much like an erasure; but no, it's only a little roughness on the surface of the paper."

I was completely puzzled. It was quite possible for me to have too little; but to have two pounds too much—I could not understand that at all.

"Well," I said to myself, "it's better at any rate than having a couple of pounds too little."

Still, the idea of there being a mistake somewhere made me feel very uncomfortable.

I had been busy preparing my accounts, in order to present them to my employers in the morning, for the morrow is quarter-day, and I knew that in nothing could a clerk offend so much as by being wrong in his balance. So I thought a little, and then determined to consult Jackson, our managing clerk.

I was very young at the time—not more than twenty; and having been in the establishment only a few months, I knew but little of his character. He was exceedingly attentive to business; yet there was some vague floating rumors going the round of the place which accredited him with anything but a steady life. But he had always been very civil, and even kind, to me; and so, in my dilemma, I sought his advice. He went over my accounts with me, but could detect nothing wrong.

"Well, Watson," he said, "you are on the right side for a novice, and, if you will take my advice you will keep there. Just pocket the money and say nothing about it."

Seeing that I demurred, he continued:

"Of course you can do as you please; but I know this much—if you were that two pounds short, you would have to make it up in quick time."

I was again about to make my objections to this mode of procedure, when I was cut short by a salesman, who came to say that Mr. Jackson was wanted in the saleroom.

As he strode away Jackson turned round and said:

"I'll see you about it again, Watson; in the meantime, you need not mention it to any one."

I saw no more of him till my labors were done for the day, and I was reaching my hat down from its peg, when he tapped me over the shoulder.

"One word, Watson, before you go: if ever it should be found out where the mistake lies, I will make it all right for you. Good-night."

That night the two pounds were ever before me. The last thing I remember before falling asleep was thinking of the two pounds; I slept and dreamt of two pounds. In the morning, whilst at breakfast, I laid the whole affair before my mother and asked her counsel.

"Give up the money, of course."

"But you see, mother, I am afraid it would offend Jackson, he seems so much to wish me to hush it up."

"Never mind Jackson; do what is right, and I am sure it will be better for you in the end. Tell Mr. Elliott (the head partner) how it is, and I am certain he won't be angry."

I ate the remainder of my meal in silence; for, whilst I did not wish to make an enemy of Jackson, who could, if he pleased, make my situation very unpleasant, I had strong compunctions about keeping the money. Breakfast was over, and, as I was leaving home, my mother took hold of my hand and said:

"Promise me, Henry, before you go that you will give up the money."

I hesitated.

"Surely, Henry, you would not steal?"

"Steal? never." And I promised at once.

Jackson found no time to speak to me that morning, being engaged with Mr. Elliott; but when, in my turn, I entered the private office, I saw him cast an inquiring glance toward me.

"The seems all right, Watson," said Mr. Elliott, after looking over my account; "have you anything else?"

"Yes, sir, I have still two pounds, of which I am unable to give any account."

"Strange! Are you sure that you have missed nothing?"

"Quite, sir; I have been over everything several times, and last night Mr. Jackson was kind enough to assist me."

"It's strange; but you can put the money back into your safe, and I dare say it will be found out before the next quarter is up. And, by-the-by, Watson, I intend raising your salary; Holloway is going to leave and I wish you to take his place."

I thanked him, and heartily, too, for twenty pounds a year was no small increase at our house.

"Let me see; I think, Jackson, he had better begin to-morrow."

"Yes, sir; it will be most convenient."

"You hear, Watson? I believe there's nothing more; good-morning."

There was joy in our house that night, and on the morrow I went forward with a light heart to take possession of Holloway's stool.

And now, dear reader, just take a jump over the next three years. Jackson was still in his place; but I had risen step by step, until I occupied a post inferior only to that held by himself.

The mystery attached to my two pounds had never been unravelled, and they still reposed peacefully in my safe. I and Jackson got on very well together; but there was one thing which I could not understand. For a few nights before quarter-day, Jackson always, under some pretense or other, took the books home with him; but, as I did not consider it my place to interfere, I said nothing.

It was the quarter-day at the end of the three years of which I have spoken, and I was assisting Mr. Elliott in examining the accounts of one of the junior clerks, whose ledger exhibited a glaring deficiency of thirty pounds odd. Again he went over it, and I could see the big drops of sweat roll down his face as he again came to the same horrible conclusion—deficit, thirty pounds odd. The youth was not the brightest in the world, and for a time he seemed stunned. But he was sure it must be some mistake of mine; his cash was all right three days ago; and he took the book to see for himself. The result was the same—deficit, thirty pounds odd. A third time he essayed to reconcile the difference; but, suddenly stopping short, he turned to Mr. Elliott and cried:

"These are not my figures, sir!"

"Then whose are they?"

"I don't know, sir; they are not mine; look, sir, sometimes has been scratched out here!"

"Umph! So there has. Has the ledger ever been out of your care?"

"No, sir—that is, yes—twice."

"When?"

"Last night and the night before."

"Who had it?"

"Mr. Jackson."

"Then call Mr. Jackson up here."

He came.

"Mr. Jackson," said Mr. Elliott, "there's an error in Brown's account; something appears to have been scratched out; and as I understand you have had his ledger the last two nights, I thought perhaps you could explain it."

Jackson looked deadly pale, and, bending down to hide the ghastly hue of his countenance, he pretended to examine the figures.

Yes, there had been an erasure; but he could explain it. He had a private memorandum in his desk; he would fetch it.

Ten minutes went by, but Jackson did not return.

"Watson," said Mr. Elliott, "will you go and say that I shall be pleased if Mr. Jackson will come here immediately?"

I went, but could not find him.

"Osborne," I asked of a porter, "have you seen Mr. Jackson?"

"Yes, sir; he went out about ten minutes ago."

"Went out?"

"Yes, sir. He came down-stairs looking very white, and, taking his hat, he said he felt rather ill and would get a little air."

I went back and told Mr. Elliott.

"Oh!" was all he uttered; and then, turning on his heel, he motioned for me to follow. He first went to Osborne, who repeated his story again, and then he crossed to Jackson's desk, which was locked. A locksmith was sent for, and the lock forced.

"Mr. Watson," said Mr. Elliott, taking out Jackson's books (he had never called me *Mr.* Watson before), "will you come with me to my private room? I shall want you for a few minutes."

That few minutes expanded into hours; and the discovery of embezzlement by Jackson, to the extent of several hundred pounds was the result of our labor. These frauds extended over several years; and, by a curious coincidence, the very first of them was connected with my two pounds—the last, of course, with Brown's thirty pounds odd.

Need I say that Jackson was never heard of again?

That night I walked home as the managing clerk of the firm of Elliott & Co., and never since have I forgotten the lesson taught me by my two pounds.

NEWSPAPER GRAMMAR.

AN EXERCISE FOR BOYS.

ONE of the college papers just received will soon run short of "of"s if it keeps on printing sentences like this:

"For the third time this year we have to chronicle the acceptance *of* the resignation *of* one *of* our Board *of* Editors."

We hope they will not take *of* fense.

Bad grammar in the *Evening Post*:

"The widows and children of the officers and men killed in action in South Africa have been given a free passage home."

The *Evening Post* used to be a purist in language. Yet here we have one of the worst of the common blunders of the day. If any boy undertakes to parse this sentence he finds that "a free passage home" is the nominative to the verb "have been given," which ought, therefore, to be "has been given"; and that "widows and children" is governed by "to" understood.

What is given? A passage.

To whom is it given? To the widows and children.

To whom are the widows and children given? To nobody.

What is given to a passage? Nothing.

OFF CAPE FEAR.

NO part of the American coast is more dreaded by seamen than the flat, desolate waste of sand that forms the eastern shore of North Carolina, whose most conspicuous point bears the ominous title of Cape Fear.

Passing vessels give this dangerous region a wide berth, especially when the weather is threatening; yet the heavy northeast gales that seem, as it were, to haunt the coast, not infrequently defeat all precautions, so that these lonely shoals, where even the fisherman's boat never ventures, are too often strewn with ghastly evidences of the impotence of man when contending with the elements.

The whole region is unspeakably dreary—designed apparently by the Creator for eternal solitude—to which Nature denies everything but rocks, waves and shifting sands, and man lends only wrecks and dead corpses.

On the 10th of October, 18—, the *Prince*, a schooner-rigged vessel, five days out from the port of Boston, lay off the Carolina coast, beating to windward against a heavy sea and an easterly gale, that had blown with steadily increasing force for the past twenty-four hours.

At three in the morning a man sent aloft for lookout shouted down from his perch:

"Light on the larboard quarter!"

The captain stood still a moment, leaning against the weather bulwarks.

Moving mechanically in the direction indicated, he swept the southwestern horizon with his night-glass.

"It is the Cape Fear light!" he said, in a husky voice, to the first mate, who had followed him.

"What are the chances?"

"Twenty to one against us, if the wind holds till daybreak."

"It blows harder every hour."

"Yes, and the sky is pitch-black," groaned the captain, throwing abroad his disengaged hand, as if to roll back the thick curtain of clouds.

The other seemed less moved; for the ship's lantern, faring close to his cheek, showed his bronzed features unperturbed. An old sea-dog, that had weathered a thousand storms, even the near prospect of death could do no more than slightly deepen the hard lines of his rough visage.

But with Captain James Mason the case was widely different. He was a brave man, brave enough to die, if need were, for the cause or being he loved—but life spread out still fresh and sweet before him.

Yet the warm, young life in his veins was not all—nor the half—he had to lose. Down there in the cabin, trembling, yet trusting hopefully in his skill and resources, was his young wife, the bride of a fortnight.

When two hours had passed the wind had not fallen—had rather increased.

The schooner, under a close reef, was kept headed, as nearly as possible, directly away from the light that was now plainly visible, shining out like a baleful meteor, warning all on board of the fearful leeway they were making.

Guns were fired, but without much hope of relief. Who was there to hear? And what aid could reach out over those sunken rocks and treacherous banks to snatch them from death?

Still there was a sort of wretched comfort in calling out in those thunder-tones for at least the pity of others, and again and again the heavy report swept out over the warring waters, hushing, by its majestic volume, their pitiless, hungry clamor.

With the first glimmer of daylight, at the request of a gray-haired clergyman, who had embarked on this ill-fated voyage in pursuit of health, all hands, except the two at the helm, were summoned into the cabin to hear prayers, doubtless for the last time.

All came readily enough—not so much from faith, perhaps, as from the want of other dependence.

The clergyman had been thinking all the night of the wife and children his death would leave in poverty; but, as he stood up in the presence of these total strangers—rough, bearded men, most of them—and turned over the leaves of his Bible, the wonted hectic of his cheek deepened; his eye brightened with the light of a strong, unselfish purpose.

He forgot his own imperiled life—his own earthly ties; he remembered only that for such as these Christ died. He read of the sea sorely buffeted by the waves, and of One that came to them in the fourth watch of the night, saying, "It is I. Be not afraid!"

But, even as he spoke, there came a cry from the deck, and almost simultaneously a jarring, quivering motion shook every timber.

The ship was aground. Even the captain's young wife, inexperienced as she was, need not be told that.

Who can measure the agony of the hour that followed? Boats were launched, only to be dashed in pieces against the ship's side. It mattered little. They could not have lived five minutes in such a sea as was running mountain-high upon those shoals and rocks.

There was nothing to be done but to cling in wretched suspense to the rigging till the ship was broken up; and then, clinging still to chance fragments, be dashed about in that tumult of mad waters, till strength and life were beaten out by the waves.

At half-past six the crisis came. The hull broke into two parts that went to fragments almost as speedily as if a thousand busy hammers were being plied for their disruption.

There were cries for help and cries for mercy: there were prayers begun, but, in this world, at least, not ended.

Some, clinging to pieces of wreck, were carried far in-shore and there broken and mangled and bruised out of all human semblance; and at last, flung wantonly upon some lonely spit of sand, or carried by the undertow, to find a resting-place, perhaps, to mid-ocean.

When the final crash came the captain, like the rest, was clinging to the rigging, one arm supporting his half-conscious wife. From instinct, rather than definite purpose, he managed to lay hold of a single spar that happened, by one chance in a thousand, to drift clear of the main line of breakers, and was at length cast up with its human freight upon the sandy beach, but only to be drawn back again by the next retiring wave.

Three times they were thus released, and reclaimed by the sea, as if in mockery of their helplessness. The man's strength was well-nigh spent; and the wife's delicate frame, which, all the while, his right arm had firmly clasped, now dragged a lifeless weight. When, for the third time the sea had reclaimed the pair, it seemed to the husband, in his exhaustion, that some invisible force was dragging his wife from his grasp. He struggled to keep his hold. In vain, she was gone. He called wildly on her name, "Julia, Julia!" He groped for her in the darkness amid the tumbling surf.

Then a great wave, mightier than all that had gone before, lifted him on its high crest of foam, and flung him insensible far up on the wet sands, out of the reach of the lesser billows.

The storm fury, the anger of the winds gradually dispersed, and the afternoon sun shone with warmth and brightness, even upon the dreary little inlet where the sole survivor of the *Prince's* crew lay still unconscious. Not three yards from him lay the dead body of the first mate, with face upturned to the sky, with blank, staring eyes, and teeth so firmly set as to give his hard features a forbidding aspect of fierce resistance.

Not long before sunset Captain Mason, warmed into life by the sun, opened his eyes upon what was henceforth to be to him a desolate world. His first act was to drag his dead comrade out of reach of the tide, and with his hands to scoop out a shallow grave in the sand. He sat by this grave all night, watching sleeplessly the Cape Fear light, weak from hunger and exposure, and tortured by thirst which there was no means of assuaging.

With the first glimmer of light he started in search of water first, then some human habitation. The desolate region that separated the inlet from the mainland was easily forded. A pool of half brackish water was soon found. Then began a long, seemingly interminable journey along the sandy beach toward Cape Fear.

What his body, diseased in mind, haunted at every step by the fear of being swallowed up in some treacherous quicksand, the late blithe commander of the *Prince* would scarcely have been recognised in the haggard, grief-stricken man who, late in the afternoon, fairly crept into a miserable fishing hamlet that lay half-buried in yellow sand.

There lacked not kind hearts in this humble spot to minister as they might to the doubly-wrecked man's needs. A party went out to search for bodies that might have been cast ashore. Most of the missing were found; but among those whom the sea would not yield up was Julia Mason, the captain's bride.

He could not give her up. For many weeks he spent most of his time wandering along the lonely beach, on the chance that some trace of her might yet be found.

'Twas in vain. The fisher-folk told of a broad and strong current that passed that part of the coast, carrying far out to sea whatever came within its grasp. It began to be whispered about among them that the captain's wits were a trifle touched with grief.

When he at last gave up the fruitless search he did not, as was expected, quit the neighborhood. The place, fraught with so many painful associations, seemed yet to possess a kind of melancholy fascination for him. He seemed never to recover from the first shock of grief. The native vigor and ambition of his young manhood withered away, as it were. Months passed into years, bringing change of fortune to others, but only gray hairs to him.

After the first year he became keeper of the lighthouse of Cape Fear. The task of constantly tending the light that had given him the first intimation of danger on that disastrous October night appeared to be the only occupation that could rouse his interest.

On stormy nights, when his light was sending its far, warning gleam over the troubled Atlantic, he seemed more cheerful than at other times, happy in the thought that, through his labors, some might shun a fate like his.

And so, for twenty desolate but not dreary years he lived on in the same place and manner. The simple people among whom he dwelt grew to feel for him a kind of reverence, not alone for the gentle sadness of his face, or the mournful story which they were never tired of relating, but chiefly for the heroic courage which he was wont to exhibit in cases of wreck.

The sight of a ship in distress seemed to rouse all the latent energy of his character. To rescue others he perilled his life so often and so freely that in time it came to be almost believed that he bore a charmed life; that the sea, having taken what was dearer than life, had no further power over him.

On a certain September night, almost twenty years after the wreck of the *Prince*, it blew great guns dead on the shoals around Cape Fear. It had blown hard all day, and by midnight the sea ran very high.

The lighthouse-keeper, as his wont was at such times, had not slept. At a little past three in the morning he heard distinctly the first gun of a ship in distress. The old man—for gray hair increased his apparent age—sighed heavily at the boding sound, remembering an event long passed, but which was never far distant from his thoughts. Then, trimming his lamps anew, and wrapping himself in a rough pea jacket, he took up a lantern that stood ready lighted and went forth into the storm, to rouse the fishermen in the hamlet near by.

Outside, the regular booming of the gun came more treshly to his ear. It seemed to him as if that mighty voice was calling to him alone from out there, where his dead wife lay. "Come, come!" it kept saying; and the lonely man answered, in thought, "I'll it be His will!"

By daylight the entire population of the hamlet, led, as in all similar cases, by Captain Mason, had gathered on the "Raven's Beak," as it was called—a long, narrow sheit of rock, that jutted out from an exposed point of the shore.

Less than half a cable's length to windward of this spot a stout, foreign-built brig now lay hopelessly stranded, and must soon go to pieces. Though so near, the crew had small chance of reaching the shore unless a line could be carried out to them, and who would undertake such a service, where the chances of failure were twenty to one? And failure meant certain death. Yet one man was there willing to brave these fearful odds.

Used as they were to his hazardous ventures, the fishermen besought their leader not to incur the desperate risk.

For answer, he pointed out the fact that, owing to the peculiar conformation of the shore, a strong current set seaward from the southern side of the rock, passing not far from the stranded vessel, and considerably lessening the violence of the sea in its path. By keeping in this current he might hope to gain a position beyond the ship, and then, turning obliquely, run in upon her with the wind.

A small, strongly-built surf-boat had been brought to the spot, embarking in which, and towing a line, James Mason started on what all feared would be his last errand of mercy.

Just before passing out from the lee side of the Raven's Beak he turned to the group of men huddled upon it, and so steadfast and tranquil was his look—as if what he did was done in answer to a welcome summons—that the superstitious notion of his charmed life revived. Then he was gone; fighting his way slowly, in the teeth of the gale, as it were, his little boat tossing like an eggshell, amid mist and foam and tumbling surf, it seeming a new miracle each moment she was not dashed in pieces.

But no, aided by the current, she made way steadily, till a point was gained to windward of the brig; then, by a dexterous stroke, the boat was headed to leeward, and let drive.

It was a dizzying sight to see the slight craft speeding along, now tossing high upon the summit of a wave, now lost to sight in the next watery abyss. How the gray-haired boatman kept in his boat and on his course in such a sea seemed something superhuman to the fishermen on the beach, and to the nearer watchers on the brig. But the grand question was, how should he board the vessel when reached.

He came in with a great wave, that struck fairly amidships. At the instant of the crash he rose to his feet and cast his tow-line on deck, where a dozen eager hands were outstretched to receive it. At the same instant the boat was crushed to atoms against the ship's side.

A cry of dismay went up from the shore, but was presently changed to a shout of triumph. Mason stood safe upon the deck.

In the moment of sinking a rope thrown out had reached his hand; bruised, but not seriously injured, he stood among the men he had risked so much to save. With foreign speech and eloquent gestures, they overwhelmed him with their thanks.

But there was yet pressing work to do. By means of the line, a stout hawser made fast at one end to the stump of the ship's mainmast was towed ashore and then secured. Along this hawser, by the aid of a pulley and ropes, a basket-shaped frame was made to pass to and fro, in which, slowly and with great hazard, man by man, the stranger's crew was conveyed ashore, till at last all but the brig's captain and Mason were safely landed.

Meanwhile, "the heavy sea that was beating against the wreck made it impossible it could hold together much longer.

Knowing that every moment was precious, the foreign captain, with the professional pride of his class, signed his companion to go first. But Mason shook his head with unalterable decision, laying his

finger at the same time upon a watch-guard made of woman's hair which the other wore, and making a significant gesture from his own breast to the deep sea beyond, telling thus the story of his own loss.

The captain comprehended; he gazed down waveringly at the fond memento of a wife in distant Spain, and went; but to his dying day never forgave himself the act.

He went, but not alone, for just as the clumsy machine was about passing over the ship's side Mason, holding the cord with which it was to be drawn back, felt something clutch at his knee. He looked down, and turned pale to behold at his feet a little girl, of apparently five years, looking up at him in round-eyed wonder.

The child was the brig's only passenger, her father, who had brought her aboard at Havana, having died at sea three days before.

In the general confusion she, last asleep in her state-room, had been forgotten by all. Mason caught her up, wrapped his own rough pea-jacket round her—for she was clad in night-gear—and gave her in charge to the captain, with a stern look of reproach. Then he signaled the men on shore to haul away at the rope, and presently to pull faster, for from below came an ominous, gurgling sound.

A little spaniel ran up from the cabin, and shaking with terror, crouched at the solitary stranger's feet, looking up to his face with that helpless dependence of dumb creatures upon human protection against an unwonted peril. He glanced down pityingly at the animal. He would fain have helped even it to life. But that might not be.

In middle passage the moving frame swayed so low that a wave broke over it, causing the child to scream with fright.

The men on shore pulled harder. The frame touched the rock. They called cheerily to Mason, "Draw in!"

But he did not stir. The deck seemed to rise and fall beneath his feet. Yet he stood still, with folded arms, looking steadfastly out to sea.

Some one, following the direction of his gaze, cried, "A sail!"

But it was only a mightier wave than the rest—a very mountain of water—that came rolling in from far out at sea, shaking its tawny crest. It caught up the quaking hull as if it had been a bubble, and strewed the fragments among the breakers.

The little spaniel came safely to land, but the brave, strong man, who had that day rescued so many lives, yielded his own to the fury of his great enemy.

Though the shore was searched for days, no trace of him was found. Even the dead body the sea claimed for its own.

Yet wide and troubled as is that grave off Cape Fear, he would not have chosen another, we may well believe; for there, for twenty dreary years, his heart, his happier self, the wife of his youth, had lain buried!

OFF CAPE FEAR.—"THE LATE BLITHE COMMANDER OF 'THE PRINCE' WOULD SCARCELY HAVE BEEN RECOGNIZED IN THE HAGGARD, GRIEF-STRICKEN MAN WHO, LATE IN THE AFTERNOON, FAIRLY CREPT INTO A MISERABLE FISHING HAMLET."—SEE PAGE 219.

PERILS OF LOGGING.

THE Winter's work of choppers, sawyers, swampers, and teamsters is to gather the huge pine logs of our forests together in some convenient place, to be put afloat when the warm weather of Spring sunders the ice-bound streams, and sets the bounding waters free to float the logs to the mills below, where they are cut into lumber for the Southern market. The bank of logs is usually made at some point where the land is far above the level of the stream, and millions of logs are rolled down and piled up one above the other in a confused mass. The business of the experienced logger is to break these roll-ways and tumble the logs into the stream as soon as the ice goes out.

John McCarthy, on the 13th of April, in Wisconsin, was engaged in breaking a roll-way on Bear Creek, about eighty miles above Wausau. The roll-way was about forty feet high. Mr. McCarthy was working near the top of the pile, when the whole mass started, falling about six feet; two huge logs were coming down directly upon him, but being a strong, active man, he sprang over the first log, but could not clear the second. Astride of this, as a horseman seats a horse, his leg was caught between the two logs and crushed to a shapeless mass, the log and its involuntary rider shooting ahead, jumped over the end of the roll-way, and plowed its rapid way down the forty-foot embankment to the margin of the stream. Mr. McCarthy was taken up by his kind-hearted and strong-handed companions, placed in a canoe or dugout, as it is called, and by hand was drawn over thirty miles overland through the woods to the nearest station, where an ox-sled and team were procured and he was brought to Wausau, where he arrived on the 17th, the journey consuming four days. His sufferings have been intense, but his vigorous constitution and the skillful attention of Dr. Wylie, his physician, will possibly bring him out without the loss of his leg, but beyond a doubt he is crippled for life.

AN INCIDENT OF MY SAILOR-LIFE.

By CAPTAIN SAM WHITING.

TEN years of my early sailor-life were passed in the Black Ball Line of the New York and Liverpool Packet Ships.

The line, at that time, was composed of eight ships—the finest specimens of naval architecture the world ever saw—and each ship made three voyages a year, carrying out cotton and naval stores principally, and returning with heavy freights of costly merchandise, dry goods, cloth, hardware, salt, etc.

Besides this costly leading, the ships averaged, each trip to the westward, about thirty first-class and between three and four hundred steerage passengers, mostly natives of that Emerald Isle whose charms and sorrows Anacreon Moore has so sweetly and so touchingly described in his melodious songs.

A ship crowded with such a motley assemblage was a little world in itself, and it may readily be imagined that scarce a passage was made without the occurrence of some incident, tragical or comical, the recital of which could not fail to interest and amuse the reader.

Thrown thus together for a long, and in most cases a stormy passage across the wild Atlantic, both officers and passengers were prompt to use every appliance to make the time pass pleasantly away.

Some of the veteran commanders of the line in those days were men of refined tastes and polished manners, as well as rare and celebrated wits; and in 183— an amusing occurrence transpired on board one of the "liners," which I can vouch to be true.

A young lady, "accomplished, beautiful and rich," was among the cabin passengers, and three very eligible young gentlemen paid assiduous attention to her from the commencement of the voyage.

She was quite partial to them also, and yet, at times, she seemed "bored" with their incessant and very marked attentions. This she acknowledged one day to her great friend, old Captain G., and asked his advice as to her choice, assuring him that she would be guided by his judgment in the matter, and favor the one he thought prized her most highly.

But how to decide?

Captain G. told her that as she often boasted of being an expert swimmer, he could assist her in arriving at a conclusion, and it was accordingly secretly arranged between them that on the first calm day the lady should fall accidentally overboard, while the suitor who jumped *first* to her rescue should be the favored candidate for her hand and fortune.

In the meantime, to avoid any risk, Captain G., unknown to all others, had a picked boat's crew ready at a moment's notice to act in any emergency.

Accordingly, on a fine day, while the ship lay sleeping, as it were, upon the tranquil waters, all on board were startled by a female shriek, a splash, and a cry of horror at the cry:

"Miss St. Clair overboard!"

The three suitors, who were playing "shovel board" on the quarter-deck, rushed frantically to the side of the ship, and two of them plunged boldly after the unfortunate young lady, but the boat's crew had rescued her before they had shaken the water from their eyes on reaching the surface.

All were soon taken on board, and as they stood dripping on the quarter-deck, the lady turned to Captain G., asking, in the most comical and imploring manner:

"And what shall I do now, captain? They are both so wet."

"Take the *dry* one," curtly replied the captain.

And she did, for they were married immediately on the arrival of the ship in New York.

A METAMORPHOSE.

In looking over my daily-kept journal of that most interesting epoch of my sailor life, I find many memoranda of incidents which I think may amuse or instruct the readers as to the passenger life of the "long ago," and I extract one which caused quite an excitement in Gotham circles at the time, in which I was immediately concerned.

In the Summer of 183— the fine packet ship on which I was engaged was lying in Prince's Dock, in Liverpool, and one day a young gentleman came on board to examine the cabins and to take a state-room for himself. I was remarkably struck by his sweet and classic face, and the perfect symmetry of his form, though his stature was only of medium height. A more melodious voice I never heard, while the pearly teeth and the small and perfect hands and feet led me to believe what Byron has asserted, "that they are unfailing indices of high birth and gentle blood."

The young man stated, in the course of conversation, that he had an elder brother who was captain of one of the British regiments then stationed in Canada, and that he was going to improve the leisure time of his college vacation by paying him a visit and seeing something of our famed Yankee land.

He seemed very inquisitive as to the number and probable character of the passengers we were to have, and expressed himself highly delighted when told that he could have a state-room to himself, next to mine.

Having selected his room, he pinned his card to the curtains and left for the consignee's office to procure his ticket. The card bore the name of

CLARENCE BEAUCLERC,

and the next day his baggage was sent down with a polite request that I would have it safely and conveniently stowed.

We sailed a day or two thereafter, and, though we had a jolly set of passengers, I saw nothing of young Beauclerc, after he came on board, until we were in the "chops" of the Channel, when, one evening, he came up to my side and inquired about the loss of the ill-fated packet *Albion*, which was wrecked long before near Cape Clear.

I asked him if he had been seasick, as I had not seen him around before, and he replied in the negative, informing me that his father owned a fine yacht, and that he had been on several lengthy cruises until he had become quite a sailor.

Beauclerc, though a young man, who had evidently moved in aristocratic society, and seemed to me the beau ideal of an English nobleman, did not become a general favorite with his fellow-passengers. He was very reserved in his deportment, never once mingling in their sports, nor joining the wine-bibbers on Sundays and Thursdays, which, in those times, were called "champagne days," the wine being furnished by the ship gratuitously.

I was the only one with whom he seemed at all at ease, and before we were half-seas over we had become almost familiars.—I could not account for it at the time, but my heart certainly yearned toward the reserved young man in a most mysterious and inexplicable manner.

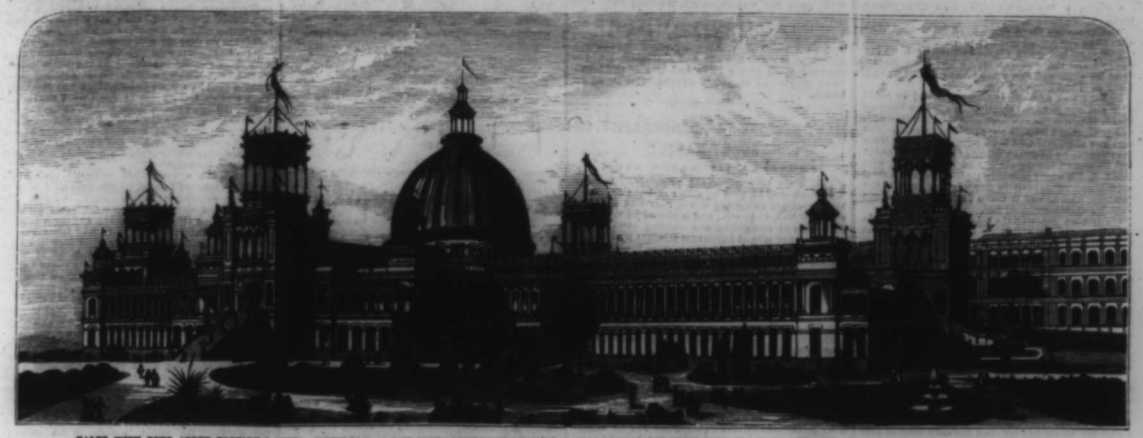
Beauclerc spent hours on deck with me in the night watches, while the rest of the passengers were carousing or playing cards, always listening with apparent delight to the "yarns" he begged me to reel off for his amusement.

I never saw him excited or disturbed but once during the passage, and that was when a wild, boisterous chap, named Spafford, said to him one day: "I say, Beauclerc, put on the gloves with me for a sparring bout. You've a famous breast and shoulders for a boxer; but I think I am a match for you in wind and pluck."

The sweet eyes dropped, and a sudden pallor overspread the exquisite face, as with a voice tremulous with emotion Beauclerc exclaimed: "I am a novice in all such arts, and a family predisposition to affections of the heart and sudden death has made me careful about getting unduly excited in any manner whatever." The tone and manner of the reply were anything but fierce, although I believe a peculiar expression accompanying them was thought to indicate a dangerous customer, if aroused, for the blustering Spafford never attempted any further familiarity with Beauclerc.

Many times during our evening talks and walks together, Beauclerc would give me glowing descriptions of the happy home he had left down in Devonshire, always speaking tearfully of fond parents, devoted sisters and loving brothers, promising to send back letters by me, which would insure

PERILS OF THE LOGGING WOODS.—JOHN M'CARTHY'S TERRIBLE RIDE ASTRIDE A LOG, AT THE ROLL-WAY ON BEAR CREEK, NEAR WAUSAU, WISCONSIN.



TALKS WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—AUSTRALIA.—THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING IN COURSE OF ERECTION IN THE INNER DOMAIN, SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.—SEE PAGE 222.

me a pressing invitation to visit them, which I must not fail to accept.

THE DENOUEMENT.

We had a short and pleasant passage to Sandy Hook, and amid the bustle of arrival and the pressing duties of my station I had barely time to notice on board the steamer which had been sent down for our cabin passengers a tall and handsome military gentleman, who hailed the arrival of Clarence Beauclerc with inexpressible delight, holding him in a very long fraternal embrace, and whom I surmised to be the "brother officer" whose regiment was in Canada.

The day after our arrival at the wharf the baggage of the passengers was sent ashore, and I received a note from Beauclerc requesting me to send his trunks to the City Hotel, then the headquarters of all that was fashionable and aristocratic in New York.

I complied with the request, and had almost forgotten my late agreeable passenger, when I received a pressing invitation to dine with "Captain Beauclerc and his brother," prior to their departure for Canada.

I accordingly made my appearance at the hotel at five P. M., and was ushered into a splendid suite of rooms, where I found the military brother and a most exquisitely lovely lady, to whom I was introduced as his wife, waiting to receive me.

We sat some time conversing about my recent short passage, and they both assured me that "Clary" had lavished all sorts of praises on me for the many kindnesses extended to him by me, when a servant entered the room and took a coat and pantaloons from the sofa, on which they had been carelessly thrown, and which I had readily recognized as the familiar habiliments of my late passenger, whose *entrée* I now momentarily expected.

Mrs. B. followed the servant from the room, as I supposed, to usher in her brother-in-law, but he came in alone, dressed in his old familiar apparel of shipboard, and giving me a cordial welcome, he asked me how I "liked the looks of his brother's Devonshire wife."

A roguish twinkle in those magnificent eyes flashed the truth upon me in an instant, and amid the most uproarious laughter, I shook my finger reprovingly in the beautiful face whose mesmeric influence I had often felt in the pleasant quarter-deck walks at sea, and saluted, with becoming warmth, the rosy lips of the newly-made bride,

CLARA BEAUCLERC.

The mystery was soon unraveled. Captain B. had long been an accepted suitor of the eldest daughter of Sir Hugh Graham, one of the wealthiest baronets of Devonshire, but the inflexibility of the father, who was averse to the match, had induced the lady to break through "conventional proprieties," and under a disguise which had proved wonderfully impenetrable to the eyes of a whole ship's company, for twenty-five days at sea, she had joined her expectant lover at New York, where, at the house of the British Consul, who had been intimate with both families at home, the happy wedding was duly solemnized.

Donning once more her graceful bridal robe, and attaching the flowing though false curls to her beautiful head, Mrs. B. was the impersonation of a happy bride, while the gallant captain, encircling her with his arms, assured me that "Clary's" natural ringlets would soon far surpass the utmost reach of art.

I had the curiosity to examine closely the cast-off coat of the late Clarence Beauclerc, and I solemnly aver that the padding therein contained forbade me lightly to estimate that "highest reach of art" which could transform a most perfect womanly figure into the symmetry and mold of an Apollo Belvidere.

Returning to the parlor after a princely repast, an elegant Dolland telescope and a gold lever of Tobias's best manufacture were presented to me by Captain B., as mementoes of the lasting friendship of himself and his lovely bride. Both articles were inscribed with my name, and within a tasty wreath each bore these memorable words: "The end has sanctified the means. C. B."

One year thereafter "Captain B., lady, child and servants" took passage with me for a visit to the now reconciled parents, and I accompanied them to their Devonshire home, spending a week in the joyfully united family circle, nearly breaking my neck at the first and last steeplechase I ever witnessed, and losing my heart for the—I don't know what hundredth time to Clara's lovely sister, Estelle Graham.

A TORNADO ON THE MISSISSIPPI.

OUR steamer had touched at Memphis, Tennessee, on a sultry evening in June, 1856, and, having discharged freight and taken on passengers, we put out and headed up-river under full steam.

To enjoy the time and scene more perfectly, I had drawn a chair to the front rail of the veranda-deck, and sat in a lotus-eating frame of mind, gazing at the magnificent panorama which every bend up-river unrolled before the eye.

The glorious flood of the Mississippi upon which we were now sailing, swelled as it then was by the great "June rise," caused by the melted snows of the Rocky Mountains, rolls down in majesty toward the sea, giving in its course two thousand five hundred miles of navigable water, and colors the Gulf of Mexico for sixty miles from the Balize with its milky hue.

I was chatting with a gentleman who was engaged in the Santa Fé trade, when suddenly there fell upon us a thick darkness, preceded by a spattering of large rain-drops. I should rather say that we were enveloped in a thick blackness, as if the scene had been almost instantly veiled by a velvet pall. The next moment, and with a roar and thunder-crash so terrible, so deafening as to almost suspend the action of the heart, a tornado was upon us.

Pushing back my chair involuntarily, I felt the deck cant up to starboard, so as to unseat me; and scrambling toward the weather-rail, I heard a terrific crash through the hurricane-deck overhead, as the two great smoke-stacks (or funnels, measuring some twelve feet in circumference) were broken off close to the upper deck, their strong iron stay-rods snapping like hempen cord, and the entire upper works of the vessel strained out of position.

The rain had become a blinding deluge, the roll and crash of the thunder deafening, and the horrors of the scene rendered more awful by the rapid flashes of sheet-lightning which momentarily lighted up the tumultuous river, now raging like a mad whirlpool.

Fearing that the whole upper works of the boat would go by the board, I crawled to the larboard stairway leading to the hull-deck, and proceeded to pull myself down, which it required all the strength of desperation to do, against the solid force of the wind; but, on gaining the lower steps of the flight, I found a group of the deck-hands, and the mate (a herculean man, of iron courage) urging them with terrible oaths to do something which he wanted done, but which their wild terror rendered them powerless to execute.

Some four or five of their number had been blown overboard and lost, and the remainder were now deaf to anything but an impulse to cling for dear life to something or anything in the darkness and terrors of the time.

The conviction instantly flashed on me that, in the event of the vessel going down, there would be no chance for life in my then position; so lifted, rather than crawling up the stairway, I regained the cabin-deck, where, on my hands and knees, passing round the larboard side, I came to a doorway leading into the saloon.

Entering this, I found everything in confusion, the furniture being all displaced. But the pendent lamps were still alight, and the relief of being able to see was very great, though counterbalanced by the feeling that, at any moment, the whole cabin or boat might keel over and be swallowed up in the maddened river.

I crawled into my stateroom to secure a life-preserver (two of which were in each boat), and on coming out saw, seated against the lower side of the cabin, one of our passengers—an invalid far gone in consumption, who had been in California, and was now returning home to die.

He sat calm and collected amidst the outcry and wild confusion that prevailed throughout the saloon, and, addressing me, asked if there was another life-preserver there.

"Yes," I replied, "there is."

"Will you give it to me?" he continued, "as I'm not well able to help myself, and the folks here are so mortal skeered I can't get any of them to do me that favor."

Returning quickly to the state-room, I procured a life-preserver, and, handing it to him, asked, hurriedly, whether he would take his chance in the cabin or if I should help him outside.

"No," said he; "I'm obliged to you; but look out for yourself. I'll stay here; it don't make much matter, nohow."

Passing out at the door I had entered by, I felt my way forward to a ladder-way leading up to the hurricane-deck, my idea being that, if the boat keeled over, I would be in a better position there, as not being liable to be caught by any top-hamper in her going down.

On reaching the opening to the upper deck I found that one of the smoke-stacks, in falling, had crashed through a portion of the steering-house, and lay partially over the aperture through which I had to pass—the space left being barely sufficient to allow the forced passage of my body.

This I essayed.

Having succeeded, with difficulty, I lay flat in the vicinity of the texas, as the cabins on the upper deck appropriated to the pilots are called. I had been in this position but a few minutes when, with a splintering crash, the larboard wheelhouse was blown into atoms, as if it had been paper; and at the same time the pantry on deck below was smashed in, its contents making a din which was audible above the storm, and gave the idea that the machinery of the boat had given way.

A vivid flash of lightning showed me a twenty-foot ladder lying a few yards aft, toward which I drew myself; and, pulling off a black silk handkerchief from my neck, I tied my left arm above the elbow to the last rung, in order that, if carried down by the swirl of the boat, the ladder would help to bring me to the surface, even should I lose my hold. Another flash of sheet-lightning, and I saw a man at the other end of the ladder, and he, seeing me at the same instant, shouted:

"How long before she goes down?"

I shouted back to him:

"The wheels are still in motion; she may reach shore without going over—keep cool. Is the ladder free at your end?"

"Yes," he answered, as I felt him try it.

"We'll know our fate in five minutes," I added, and neither of us spoke again.

Oh, those five minutes! Never have I passed such in the course of a long, diversified life, and, I trust, never shall again.

I had tried in vain to get off my boots and coat, the blinding rain and the force of the storm preventing a successful effort; and as I lay, with quickened breath, expecting the instant climax, there was a dull, heavy thud that made everything shake, a bright flash of light from the lower deck, as furnace-doors were flung open, and above us we saw the steep, clay bank and dark outline of the forest-trees of the Tennessee shore, against which we had been driven.

I instantly began to free my arm from its lashing, but the silk handkerchief having strained, made it difficult to unloose its knot. While so engaged I saw the man who had hold of the other end of the ladder dash wildly across the deck toward the top of the starboard wheel-box, evidently intent on jumping from it to the steep and crumbling bank which now overhung us.

Not being yet free, I could not rush to stop him, so shouted with all my might, "Don't jump!" But, not hearing, or unheeding me in his terror, he sprang, and was lost.

Getting loose at last, I made my way quickly to the lower deck, where a terrible scene of tumult and confusion presented itself. The open furnaces gave abundant light, and the boat was held against the bank by the force of the wind, but was being slowly moved down-stream with a grating motion, influenced by the current.

The captain and crew, with many of the passengers, were in a group on the forward deck; the former silent and quite unnerved, but the mate—with no clothing on him save a red flannel shirt, the sleeves rolled above the elbow, and pantaloons thrust into a pair of long, cowhide boots, his thick hair hanging in drenched masses about his face—rushed forward, with a broad ax in his hand, and in a voice which rang above the din of the elements shouted to the crew:

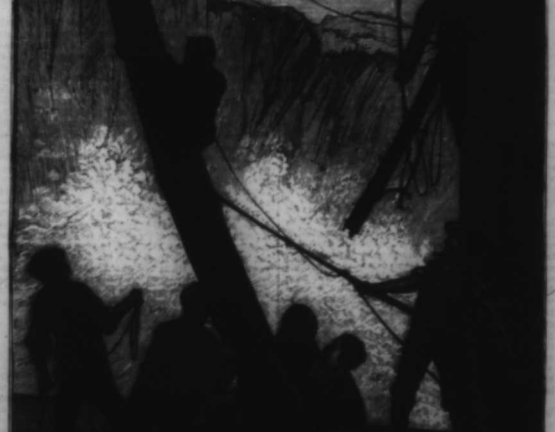
"Stand by, every man of you! I'll cut down any one who don't do as I tell him! Get out a plank here! Go ahead with larboard wheel! Up with that plank—up with it!" he roared, as a long, stout plank was run up at a sharp angle to the top of the bank. "Bring a rope!" he continued; and, seizing an end of it when brought, he took one of the most active of the crew, passed it with a double half-hitch round his body, under the arms, and thrusting him forward to the deck-end of the plank, shouted: "Six of you stand here by this plank and keep it fair. Then addressing the man with the rope, he said: "Up with you, and make that rope fast on the bank."

"I'll never be able to get up that plank, Mr.——," said the man, hesitating.

"Up with you!" shouted the mate, fiercely, at the same time pushing him on to the plank, up which, thus urged and helped, he scrambled on hands and knees, over and anon slipping in his effort. "Pay out! Slack the rope, one of you! Bring a pole here!" shouted the mate; and, seizing it when handed to him, he pushed it up after the man. "Put one foot on the pole! Grip hard! Look alive! You'll do it!" he cried, as all eyes were bent on the poor fellow who was doing his best to obey orders.

Notwithstanding the help of the wheel, the boat was all this time drifting, and there was great difficulty in keeping the plank from swaying or being overturned as it passed along the uneven edge of the bank.

Once or twice the man was all but turned off from his perilous position, saving himself only by a clasp of both arms and legs; but at length he won the top, and scrambled on shore amid the cheers that involuntarily burst from all present, except the mate, who grimly shouted:



A TORNADO ON THE MISSISSIPPI.—"'I PUT ONE FOOT ON THE POLE! GRIP HARD! LOOK ALIVE! YOU'LL DO IT?' HE CRIED, AS ALL EYES WERE BENT ON THE POOR FELLOW, WHO WAS DOING HIS BEST TO OBEY ORDERS."

"Shut up! Pay out the rope; look alive, you up there; make fast!"

And presently there came back from the bank above the cry: "All fast sir!"

The rope being now secured on the boat, we lay steady; and the tempest, which had been moderating for some minutes, passed away almost as suddenly as it had come upon us.

The sky was, as it seemed, unveiled, and we could now see our position clearly. We lay on the east shore, opposite the southern point of Flower Island, and presented a pitiable appearance of wreck. The hull was safe, and had been partly prevented from overturning by its heavy cargo of sugar hogsheads; but mainly by the heroic action of our pilot, who stood to his wheel faithfully throughout the fearful ordeal, and succeeded in keeping her head to the tempest, which, had it taken her broadside, would have inevitably capsized her.

I will here describe the pilot and his action. In person he was a thin, delicate-looking man, of about thirty years of age, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, of a silent habit, and the cast of his thought tinged by a deep but quaint seriousness. I had spent a good deal of my time on the voyage in the steering-house, and became much interested in him; the more so, as I could find out but see that he was suffering from consumption. He felt and spoke as if his life would not be a long one, and was given to speculate on the existence which lies beyond the stars. He was in charge of the wheel when we were struck by the tornado, and I append his account of the circumstances as narrated to me that night.

When I sat with him in his cabin, and he had so far recovered from exhaustion as to be able to converse, he said to me: "I had headed her out to pass close by Flower Island, and cut off the bend, as well as to to escape the current which sets into it, when I saw the storm coming, and had only time to pull the wheel hard down, so as to bring her head to it, when it became black behind me. I couldn't see, and thought I had been stricken blind by the lightning. She didn't come up quick enough to the helm, and the next thing I knew was the breaking of the smoke-stacks—the larboard one falling on the steering-house, clogs me, and smashing it right down to the deck, the remainder of the light work of the house being blown away; and I had to turn my back to the wind as much as I could to catch my breath. I next heard the wheel-house go; and when the pantry was blown in, I did believe she had burst up. I began to feel my arms giving way from the strain, but I knew that if I *let that wheel up a point* she'd go right over; so I got my feet jammed against the wheel frame, and held on like grim death; until she took the bank; and when she did strike, I was so fastened on to that wheel that I couldn't let it go for some time."

I asked him how he felt, and what he thought, at the time. "Well," he continued, "I *felt* that it was all up with us; but I *thought* just the same thing, and that was to hold the wheel hard down until we struck. Well, when we did strike, and they threw open the furnace-doors below, and that I found I was not blind, I felt good, but was so played-out by the excitement that I could scarcely crawl down to my cabin, all energy seeming to have left me when I let go!"

Such was the account of this brave and modest man, who, had he been less heroic, would have endeavored to save his own life by leaving the wheel, although, in so doing, he would almost certainly have lost it and also those of all on board. And here I may say that his was but an instance of the courage, devotion and faithfulness which have at all times distinguished the pilots of the Mississippi—one of whom, not long before, had stood at his wheel when the boat had taken fire, and held to his post until he had beached her, whereby the lives of all on board were saved, except that of the heroic man himself.

Like the famous James Maxwell, he remained faithful to his charge, and was burned to death, though he might have saved himself by jumping overboard, had his soul been compounded of any less noble elements than that which impelled him to sacrifice his own life to save those of the passengers.

We had not been moored more than half an hour when a great portion of the bank against which we lay "caved in," and falling on the guards of the ladies' cabin, carried them sheer down, depositing some fifty tons of earth on our lower deck. All hands, crew and passengers alike, had to turn to at once and clear this off, so as to right her.

It was a work of great labor, and had to be done in a hurry, as we feared another "slide" might take place.

When we succeeded in getting her on an even keel, the mate gave orders to cut the mooring rope and let her drift until we reached a safer bank. This was done, and, about a mile down-stream, we came to a wood-yard, where we tied up to repair damage and count loss. As to the former, we found in addition to the smoke-stacks that the whole upper-works of the boat had been wrenched from position, one wheel-box gone, most of the deck-cargo lost, and rudder strained. As to loss of life, some five of the deck hands and three passengers were missing.

By the afternoon of next day we had so far repaired damages as to continue our voyage; but had to organize relays of the passengers, forming gangs, which "stood by," with buckets of water passed up from below, with which the showers of sparks, which were continuously poured out by the stumps of the smoke-stacks, were extinguished as they fell thickly over the hurricane-deck. A thick fog fell as the sun went down, and being off duty, I had gone to my state-room and lay down to rest. Being much exhausted, I fell asleep almost immediately, and had been so for about an hour, when I was suddenly thrown with violence out of my berth, and heard at the same instant a general crash.

Soon as I recovered my senses, I perceived that the boilers had burst, and rushed into the saloon, where the tables, chairs, panel-mirrors, etc., were strewed promiscuously on the floor, and the passengers rushing wildly about, asking what was the matter. Pickward, my way quickly out of the guards, I heard a great hubbub on the lower deck, the voice of the mate rising above the din: "Starn all! full speed! man the pumps there!" etc. Going down, I found that we had run full speed, head on, against the bank, the fog being so dense that you could not see anything a rod off. The consequence was that we had bent our keel, sprung a leak, and were making water very fast. The pumps were vigorously plied; but, after an hour's hard work, the carpenter reported the leak increasing.

Here again the resourceful judgment of the mate came to the rescue. He got the greater portion of the sugar-hogsheads taken up from the hold, and placed one half aft, and the other well forward; and then, as he said, "straightened out the backbone of the darned thing." The result being that, in two hours, we had pumped her dry, and went upon our way rejoicing, reaching Cairo that night.

At that point I left the boat to proceed to St. Louis, while she went upon her voyage up the Ohio; and, as I stood on the landing-place and saw the extent of the damage she had sustained, I had a realizing sense of the force and fury of the hurricane, which had so nearly proved fatal to all on board.

EASY LESSONS IN PHONOGRAPHY, OR SHORT-HAND.

SHON AND TIV LARGE HOOK.

ONE more very important principle. A large hook may be used on either straight or curved stroke letters in writing words that end with the sound of tion, sion, etc., and is placed on the right-hand side of straight up and slanting strokes, and on the upper side of horizontal straight strokes.

On *curved* strokes the large *shon* hook follows the same direction as the curve. If the large hook is written on the *left* hand side of the perpendicular or diagonal letter, it is called the *Tiv* hook, and stands for the sound of *tive* at the end of words. But as the hook must follow the direction of the curves, the curved letters cannot take the *tiv* hook. When necessary, therefore, to write *tive* final, *Tee* with the small V hook is written. Not many, however, occur.

The nomenclature is Pee-shon, Bee-shon, etc. With the Tiv hook, *Pee*-tiv, Bee-tiv, etc.

In addition to the smoke-stacks that the whole upper-works of the boat had been wrenched from position, one wheel-box gone, most of the deck-cargo lost, and rudder strained. As to loss of life, some five of the deck hands and three passengers were missing.

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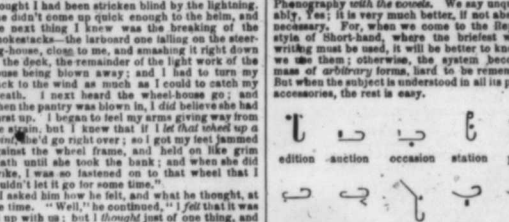
opposition possession position precision procession persession
acquisition accession cession physician cession association
devotion division diffusion profession abbreviation transition
physicians possessions persecutions transitional devotional provisions
[final

You will notice the Short-hand, though spread, is much shorter in space than the print.

According to rule for Shon write: Aberration, creation, desecration, depredation, desperation, devastation, duration, declination, dimination, degradation, demonstration, dissolution, dissension, deprivation, disapprobation, distillation, determination, estimation, emanation, extermination, fermentation, gradation, habituation, hesitation, intoxication, inebriation, limitation, moderation, nation, notion, profanation, reparation.

According to rule for Eshon in this lesson, write: Opposition, obsession, discussion, accession, accusation, recission, recession, secession, cessation, incision, succession, suppression, derivation, decisions, accusations, associations, incisions.


edition auction occasion station passion
collision collusion optician notion nation
exhibition fashion oration mission emotions
recitative talkative captive negative attractive
illustrative prospective executive respective lucrative

In like manner, write:

Ration, cushion, action, caution, addition, option, portion, citation, section, apparition, operation, creation, separation, petition, inaction, immersion, magician, meditation, imitation, erection, elocution, location, election (Lay-Kay and Ei-Kay, respectively), assertion (Ess-Ray-Shon), vacation, vocation, quotation, occupation, education, direction (Der-Kayshon), probation, expression, veneration, effusion, emission, illusion, allusion, station, lotion, ovation, vision, solution (Ise-Lay-shon), version, aversion, animation, invasion, mention, violation, donation, attention, inventions, abominations, population, passionate (Pee-shon-Tee), additional, occasional, corruptive, reception, deception, destructive, productive, invective, collective (Kel-Kaytiv), etc., etc.

SMALL SHON HOOK.

Beside the large hooks referred to in the previous lesson, the little graceful *twitch* which you observe in the examples below, is used in very many important cases in writing. It is made on the left-hand side of the stroke, it is simply a continuation of the En hook into a Shon hook, and the two together make *nshon*, and the vowel follows the s. Without the en hook, it is written on the right-hand side.

To distinguish it from the last-given sign for the syllable Shon, this is called small shon hook—or, better still, as it is always preceded by the vowel, and *as*, named by Graham, *Eshon*—that is, shon with an *e*, or some other vowel before it. The plural may be added by the circle S joined to the hook.

The Eshon also occurs in the *middle* of words. In many cases, if the vowelizing of E-hon is omitted, there is no danger of illegibility. Practice on this until you have thoroughly memorized it, even if it takes you all the week to write the words correctly, and without hesitation. Also review the previous numbers carefully. "Familiarity" in this case does not bring "contempt," but delight. A good way to test your improvement, and make an interesting comparison, is to repeat your Phonographic word-sign on a line or full page of your paper, first without the vowels (your speed increasing as you go along), dotting the vowels after wards, and then counting the number of words you have written; then try the same number of words in long-hand, and notice the difference in your time and labor.

This is quite amusing to a locker-on, who knows less about it than you do. Notwithstanding your comparative slowness, it gives you a good idea of the value of your work and the speed you are acquiring.

But be slow and sure at first, and the necessary speed will follow of itself. Also, make it a rule to write out in long-hand the nomenclature or description-names of the signs you are writing. Write the names under the signs, then write the signs under the names, then cover up the signs and write the names once more, and so on. A card will answer for concealing one or the other, alternately.

A WONDERFUL RUNNER.

THE feats of our pedestrians, though surprising enough, are cast into the shade by the recorded exploits of Ernst Mensen, a Norwegian sailor in the English navy, early in the present century. Although for a long time known to his shipmates as an extraordinary runner, he first attracted public attention by running from London to Portsmouth, a distance of seventy-three miles, in nine hours, on a wager that he could accomplish the feat in ten hours, and soon after he ran from London to Liverpool, 150 miles, in thirty-two hours. Mensen did not quit the sea until he had distinguished himself in the battle of Navarino in 1827, but shortly after that date he became a professional runner. After winning a number of lesser matches, he was induced to undertake the great feat of running from Paris to Moscow.

He started from the Place Vendôme at 4 o'clock in the afternoon of June 11th, 1831, and entered the Kremlin at 10 o'clock A. M. of June, 25th, having accomplished the distance of 1,760 miles in thirteen days and eighteen hours.

This feat, as might be supposed, created a decided sensation throughout Europe, and the employment of Mensen as a courier extraordinary by kings and princes became a popular amusement in European courts. He ran from country to country and from court to court, bearing messages of congratulation, condolence, or dispatches of greater importance, and whenever matched against the regular mounted couriers, easily succeeded in beating them.

He always carried with him a knapsack, compass, and as many biscuits and ounces of raspberry syrup as there were to be days occupied on the journey. In Winter he took with him a pair of long, slender Norwegian snow-shoes, and in traveling he always chose the most direct line, turning out neither for mountains nor rivers, but climbing the one and swimming the other. He never walked, but invariably ran, keeping up a long, swinging lope for hours at a time without rest. His only refreshment was one biscuit and an ounce of raspberry syrup per day, and two short rests of ten or fifteen minutes each in twenty-four hours. These rests he took while standing and leaning against a tree or other object of support. At such times he covered his face with a handkerchief and slept, and after such a nap he would pursue his way apparently as refreshed as though he had slept for hours.

In 1833 he started from Munich at 1 P. M. June 6th, with dispatches from the King of Bavaria to his son Otto, King of Greece. These dispatches were delivered at Nauplia at 9 A. M. July 1st, or seven days sooner than if they had been sent by the regular post.

In 1836, while in the employ of the British East India Company, Mensen was charged with the conveying of dispatches from Calcutta to Constantinople through Central Asia. The distance is 5,615 miles, which the messenger accomplished in fifty-nine days, or in one-third of the time made by the swiftest caravan. On this wonderful journey he made his way across terrible deserts, awful salt-swamps, where for hundreds of miles he saw no living being, and through countries whose inhabitants were savage robbers, and who lived in a state of continual warfare.

At last the project was broached to Mensen to explore the Nile and attempt to solve the most interesting geographical problem of the age, the discovery of the sources of that great river. He set out from Silsela on May 11th, 1843, and ran to Jerusalem, and thence to Cairo and up the western bank of the river into Upper Egypt. Here, just outside the village of Syane, he was seen on the morning of January 23d, 1843, to stop and rest, leaning against a palm-tree, with his face covered by a handkerchief. He rested so long that some persons tried to wake him, but they tried in vain, for he was dead. He was buried at the foot of the tree, and it was years before his friends in Europe knew what fate had befallen him.

TWO WAYS OF LIVING.

ONCE more our walk leads us among the gunsmiths, where in one of the gloomy streets of Birmingham, England, we call on a journeyman gunlock maker, who is an intelligent specimen of his class.

After a few remarks about tools and workmanship, our conversation takes a turn with the inquiry:

"Which should you think is the poorest and worst-paid trade in Birmingham?"

"Well, I dunno as any trade in partic'lar is very bad: most trades makes good money just now."

"But how is it so many poor-looking people are seen about the streets, and so many houses look dirty and poverty-stricken?"

"Yes, but 'tain't 'cause people are bad off so much as 'cause they dunno how to spend what they gets properly. Many a one gets more nor I do, a many fifty shillin' a week, as hasn't got a penny to bless theirselves with by Wensdays or Thursdays."

"What do they do with their money?"

"Do? 'Tis easy enough to say what they does with it—a-treatin' everybody at the public-house, o' Saturday nights, a little bit o' gamblin', and often a precious blow out Sundays and Mondays. Then there's lots on 'em as don't work above half a week, so don't get so much by half as they might. Often them as earns the most seems the wo'st off. Every pint o' ale as some of 'em drinks comes (costs) sixpence, 'cause o' the time as is lost."

"Then, in your opinion, there is not much real poverty in Birmingham?"

"I believe a very little collected among the working-class 'od relieve all the real poor, such as laborers sometimes out o' work, widders and orphans, and such like, without the great place at Winson Green (the workhouse); and there needn't be no poor-rates if everybody was sober and industrious. From what I know what men 'll do for one another, I'm sure they could do all as is necessary for one another, if they only chose to try. I've tried both ways of livin', and I know all about it."

"What do you mean by both ways of living?"

"Well, you see, me and my brother was brought up reg'lar back. Father was a good workman, and I've knowed him earn four pound of a sober week, but he never give us no learnin' wo'th speakin' of, and our house wasn't fit for anybody to come into. He spent so much money, and lifted away his time so, that sometimes mother haven't had the value of a loaf of bread, nor enough to buy a Sunday's dinner; so she went to work at a screw-factory, and we four children done best as we liked; and when I was nine, father took me to help him at the works. Then I might be rode in his cart; a'most if he'd only bin a sober man. He died quite a old man at forty-seven, and mother was better off without him than with him. I soon left home after I was fourteen, and got lodgin's, and went on bad enough for 'earn' four shillin's a week, and didn't care for nothin' till I was about twenty, when I kept company with the young 'ooman as is my wife, and she says I'll never get married till you are stiddier, and begins to save a bit; and she could read and write. I couldn't scarcely read; so says she, 'And why don't you learn to read?' A man ain't nothin' as can't read, not alone writin';' so I went to Severn Street School, and that was the means of my being stiddier, and now I don't want for nothin'. I puts by my five shillin' a week, and don't miss it. Some o' my old acquaintance calls me a dull, slow sort o' customer, but I know how to enjoy myself. I got my garden; that's al'ays a pleasure; and last Summer me and my wife and the children went to Wales, and Leamin'ton; we see all over Warwick Castle, and never enjoyed nothin' more in our lifes. It cosses a smart bit o' money to go out with three or four children, but not much more'n I've often spent in myself on a week's spree. Then I had a week myself at the Isle o' Man, this year I mean goin' to Wales. Then you see we don't want for nothin' here at home, and things goes comfortable like with us."

This simple tale, here repeated in the words in which it was told, is a striking example of the two ways of living. It illustrates, too, one of the new habitual recreations of the people, who, more perhaps than those of any other town, indulge in railway trips and holidays in picturesque places. Happily there are many Birmingham men who, if questioned, could tell a similar tale. One single class in the Severn Street School have saved among them more than a thousand pounds, which is a good beginning toward a practical application of the notion that the working-classes of England may, as a rule, live entirely independent of extraneous aid.

We learn to climb by keeping our eyes not on the hills that lie behind, but on the mountains that rise before us.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

AUSTRALIA.

SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES.

SYDNEY, the capital of the flourishing colony of New South Wales, stands at the head of the list of important Australian towns.

Part of the town stands on a promontory, with Darling Harbor on the west; part occupies a narrow valley east of it; and the remainder is on undulating ground, extending south and east, with extensive water frontage on the north and north-east.

The main streets are well laid out at right angles, but many are crooked and narrow, giving the city the appearance of an old English town. Steam ferryboats, hackney coaches, omnibuses, carts, drays, and wagons crowd the streets. Most of the public buildings, banks and warehouses are of free-stone, in the Italian composite, style.

The Exchange, the Government House, and University are fine specimens of architecture, and the new Post-office and the Town hall are imposing edifices.

Other noteworthy buildings are the new Railway Station, the Courts of justice, the Parliament buildings, and the Treasury. There are three fine theatres, spacious markets, and several parks and gardens. Hyde Park contains forty acres, the Domain Park one hundred and thirty-eight acres, and the Botanic Gardens, the finest in the colony, thirty-eight acres. Another large park, called Moore Park, has recently been laid out, and has an area of five hundred acres.

Sydney harbor is completely land-locked, and the largest vessels can come close to the wharves.

The port is well defended by several forts and batteries, and the town has at its own expense fitted out a formidable turret-ship, which acts as a coast-guard vessel.

The people of New South Wales have resolved to hold a World's Fair, and a handsome building is now in course of erection in the Inner Domain, at Sydney, and will be worthy of the occasion and of the colony. The exposition is intended to develop the resources of the colony, and familiarize foreigners with the Australian market.

The rapid growth of Sydney and its surroundings is really marvelous, when you come to think that only a little more than fifty years ago the natives performed their savage dances under the trees on its site. When the two dark, lofty rocks, which seem to form the gates of the harbor are passed, a noble estuary presents itself, decked with the loveliest bays, inlets, islands, villas, cottages and gardens; and the silvery sand on the smiling beach forms a glittering border to the beautiful bay.

JUST SPLENDID!

Orville and Dan;
Or,
Adventures in Japan,
By COMMODORE AH-LOOK.
Begins in our next.

Wandering Willie;
Or,
Lost in the Bush.
THE ADVENTURES OF A MISSIONARY'S SON 'N THE WILDS OF AFRICA.
By one of the most popular authors whose stories were ever read by boys.

Three Boys:
A Story of a High School,
BY W. O. STODDARD.

Roy the Ranger:
A Story of the Mexican War.
And
Wild Rose and Violet;
Or,
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THE ROUND TABLE.

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ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 650.

1. Lever, Reade—LeeR, EyE, Vienna, EnD, RoaE. 2. Pineapple. 3. R, Sea, Spade, Realgar, Edgar, Ear, R. 4. Pan-cake, 5. Paper, Above, Poise, Event, Rests. 6. Ot-to-man. 7. The ear. 8. Raptor, A pier, Pier. 9. A snail. 10. Port-manteau.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 650.

1.—L. Chappuis, Brooklyn, N. Y.
2.—A. W. Seguin, New Orleans, La.
3.—G. P. Saunders, Lawrence, Mass.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—SQUARE WORDS.

A book used by Catholic priests; to ascribe to; games; author of "Lives of Saints"; to tune; to diminish.

2.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Primals near with hard is classed;
Finals, detergent unsurpassed;
Primals and finals together, I guess,
In slang will idle flattery express.

By this men rouse the wrath of heaven
This river flows on smooth and even;
A nimble insect whose sharp bite you shun,
You can't catch him in this, or kill him with gun.

3.—PICTORIAL DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Read the initials and finals of each word.

4.—CHARADE.

My first is a prominent part of your nose,
Or a spike of oats, barley or wheat.
From second the lark, when night's shadows are fled,
Arises bright Phœbus to greet.
If you wish to do good, wed the thought to the deed,
Be my whole, persevere, and you'll surely succeed.

5.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

My primals to burn you soon will see,
Or part of a boy's name it may be:
While finals among the girls you seek;
Of a queen of the name you oft hear speak.

A river in Colombia find;
Another in New York:
Then one in Brazil to it bind,
Then Texas is the talk.

6.—CHARADE.

lover after third proposed,
But second got, 'tis sad to say;
A fever whole of him disposed.
To first him friends then bent their way.

7.—DECAPITATION.

My whole is a head, very spruce, as you know;
Beheaded a place where for pleasure you go;
Beheaded again it held tables of stone,
Of which the whole story to all is well known.

8.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A consonant; a beverage; to worship; one of the United States; the heath family; a Latin goddess, transposed; a vowel.

9.—CHARADE.

My first in Summer oft is seen,
Before the light breeze waving green;
My second I've no doubt will be
This evening in your cup of tea.
My whole will often bring relief
Unto the loudest infant grief.

10.—CHARADE.

My first in many a field is see.,
Of various hues, brown, white and green,
Living, it may the eye delight,
But dead it is an ugly sight.
My next in other lands and days
Roamed wildly through the forest ways.
A prisoner now, but kept and fed,
Kind hands supply its food and bed;
But, strange to say, when cold and dead,
We hang it up without a head.
My whole beside my first is seen
With solemn pace and curious mien;
'Tis sheltered from its many foes—
In armor (not of proof) it goes;
When Winter comes, secure from harm,
Making its nest all soft and warm,
It sleeps away the cold, dark hours,
And wakes again with April showers.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

WHY are your nose and chin constantly at variance? Because words are continually passing between them.

"WHAT was the origin of the noble house of Fitz Clarence?" asked the teacher of a class in history, to which a boy answered: "One day old Clarence had fits, and after that they called him Fitz Clarence."

BOSTON PRECOCITY.—*Jack* (aged ten years or under): "I trust, Tommy, that you believe in the non-essentiality of a pre-existent first cause." *Tommy:* "Oh, certainly. At least, I go no further back than the primordial atomic globule." Exeunt, driving their hoops.

TWO SOPHOMORES enter a horse-car; the first takes the only vacant seat, and the second sits in his lap. Presently a young lady enters, and the second soph, rising, says, "Take my seat, madam." Fact.

IT is an interesting sight watching a young lady at a Sunday-school endeavoring to instruct a class of little girls, while her own mind is centred upon a class of big boys.

AN old bachelor was upbraiding his nephew for betraying a matter which he had wished to keep secret. "It wouldn't have got out," said the nephew, "if I hadn't told my sister." "Ah!" responded the old bachelor, "nobody ever yet told a woman anything without producing a telling effect."

A SHORT time ago a little boy went with his father to see a colt. He patted the colt's head and made quite a fuss over it, until finally the stableman told him to be careful that the colt did not turn round and kick him. When the little chap went home his mother asked him what he thought about the colt. "I like him pretty well," was the reply. "He's real tame in front, but he's awful wild behind."

HIS ANSWER.

A teacher of a primary class in one of the Westfield Sunday-schools, was recently considerably set back when she asked her little flock one of the questions from the Lesson Leaf: "How would you feel if you could never go to church?" A small boy piped out, "Bully." "Why, Jimmy, what do you mean by such an answer?" gasped the teacher. "That's what my uncle said when I asked him to give me the answer," said the boy, "and I guess he's right, don't you?"

NERVOUS little Bob R. was nearly frightened into fits one day when banging old Parson Paw, in his hard, unsuming way, with a voice like thunder, asked him suddenly: "Who made the world in six days and rested the seventh?" "I did!" screamed the child, bursting into tears; "but—I'll—never do so —any more."

LOVE REWARDED.—A contemporary has this tragedy of T's. The thunder threatened, the tempest tossed the trees, throwing their trembling trunklets topsy-turvey. Tripping toward the town, Theresa thought, "To-night Theodore treads the tiresome thoroughfares, thinking things that——" Thud! The terrified truant turned to trace the threatening turmoil. There toward the toll-gate tramped Theodore trying to throttle two thieves. "Take to the timber Theresa!" thundered Theodore. "Tell that to timid things," thought Theresa, treading tiger-like toward the trio. Then, telling Theodore to throw the taller thief, Theresa taking Father's toga, tied through the thickness the thief's throat. Thus terminated the terrible troubles that threatened the twain. They turned triumphantly to town to tell the tale. To-morrow ties them together!

SCHOOLMISTRESS (just beginning a nice improving lesson upon minerals to the juniors)—"Now, what are the principal things we get out of the earth?" *Youthful Angler*, aged four (confidently)—"Worms."

A SHORT time ago a little boy went with his father to see a colt. He patted the colt's head and made quite a fuss over it, until finally the stableman told him to be careful that the colt did not turn round and kick him. When the little chap went home his mother asked him what he thought about the colt. "I like him pretty well," was the reply. "He's real tame in front, but he's awful wild behind."

WHICH two letters of the alphabet are like the most cruel of the Roman Emperors?—N and P.—Why N and P?—Because they are near O.

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A TERRIBLE DISASTER AVERTED.

ALMOST remarkable example of the effect of discipline was furnished at the recent fire in Grammar School No. 17, in Forty-seventh Street, near Ninth Avenue, New York City. The fire was discovered at half-past ten o'clock on the morning of Thursday, April 3d, at a moment when over two thousand little children were in the various rooms, engaged in their studies. The alarm came suddenly, being started by the discovery by one of the smallest children of a line of smoke curling upward through the floor. The children quickly saw the peril, and were naturally filled with terror and apprehension; but the teachers saw it, too, and, with the most admirable composure and courage, they quickly devised and executed a plan, which resulted in the escape of every one of the children from the burning building, not only without the loss of a single life, but without an injury worth mentioning to any of the little ones.

The fire started in the basement, just under a room in which were two hundred little boys and girls of the primary classes, whose ages ranged from six to eight years. Close by the boys' classes stood the heaters, and as the lessons were quietly proceeding, one of the little fellows, only six years of age, saw a thin film of smoke ascend through a crack in the floor, and curl around the slate he held in his hand. He started to his feet with a childish cry of alarm, and Miss McGuire, the teacher in charge of this class, saw a little cloud of smoke and three small forks of flame shoot up from the pine boards under the children's feet.

It was a moment of terrible peril, but the self-possession of the teachers and the discipline of the pupils proved sufficient to prevent a panic.

Mrs. McCloskey, the principal of the primary department, was called in, and proved to be fully equal to the occasion. She knew that if the children grew excited, they might trample each other under foot. So she calmly opened the glass partition, and said, in her quiet way, "Children, I want you to follow me, without any disorder;" and, on both galleries, the children rose and followed the placid old lady into the assembly-room.

There they stood, huddled together in frightened awe.

Mrs. McCloskey told them that she wanted to send them home early that morning. Said one economical little man, "Teacher, I haven't my hat." Nor was he destined to find it, for at this instant a stream of fire shot from the gallery, and the doors of the partition were quickly closed to hide the glowing spectacle.

With pale faces and trembling limbs, the children were marched into the yard on either side and thence into the street, where, recovering from their stupor with sudden gush of feeling, they tore swiftly home, shouting and gesticulating and tumbling one over the other.

But the flames were now eating away the woodwork of the galleries. They devoured the children's clothes and hats and the precious stores of sandwiches that tender mothers' hands had manufactured for their little ones.

The glass of the centre partition cracked beneath the heat; but the fire found a strong draught underneath, and soon reduced raised benches to embers.

While this was happening in the primary school and in the street, the flames were licking the ceiling above the galleries, and their fiery shafts, piercing the thin rafters, had penetrated into room No. 13 on the second floor.

All the children of this floor were playing in the yard when the alarm was given, and had easily made their escape. But on the third floor was the grammar school, and here Miss Kierstead held away over eight hundred girls, distributed in separate class-rooms. In the assembly-room, eighty-five girls were writing.

When Miss Kierstead first heard the hubbub below, she thought that the boys were fighting, and stilled her girls. She listened again, and the uproar was more distinct. Then from room 13 came the film of smoke. The girls rose hastily, all pale, some staggering, some nearly fainting.

The news was quickly passed from class-room to class-room, and the teachers kept order among their hushed pupils till orders were given to throw open the door. One by one the girls were passed down; the fire was on stairways that were built as fire-escapes. There was no crowding, no jostling, no screaming, only an indefinable presentiment of evil.

There were two lame girls in the school, and as their crutches brought them to the head of the stairway, some of their companions fell back, and others twined their arms tenderly around them, and so conveyed them safely into the street. Nothing was so remarkable in the scene as its quietude.

The smoke had filled the room; but Miss Kierstead, about blinded, staid there still. She laid hands on every girl until each had passed out in single file. She collected their clothes, sorted their books, packed up their lunches. Finally a policeman touched her on the shoulder, and said it was unsafe to remain; then, and not till then, she consented to go.

Meanwhile Officer Heavey, of the Twenty-second Precinct, who was on duty in front of the school, had heard of the alarm and hastened to the engine-house in Forty-seventh Street. Engines Nos. 73 and 76 and Hook and Ladder Company No. 4 promptly answered his call. Thence he hastened to the station-house in Forty-seventh Street, which is the second building from the school, and Sergeants Courtright and Took, with Roundsman Crook, called out the reserve.

They cleared the street to either avenue, the children flocking before them like frightened birds, and so formed cordons at both ends of the street. Seldom have the police restrained such a crowd as broke against their lines on both sides.

Mothers came rushing down the avenues, their bonnets thrown off, their hair streaming in the wind.

The rumors had driven them wild. They clasped the policeman's arms, twitched them by the coat, knelt at their feet, imploring that they might pass and save their children. One of them would catch sight of a little violet hood in the crowd, would rush forward in eager haste, and as quickly fall back with white despair upon her face. Another one met her child staring open-mouthed at the panic, and quietly put back the hair from the child's eyes, and then fainted away upon the stones. Not without relief would one turn from them to view the heartlessness of some fashionable mother, represented by her white-capped French bonne, whose magpie chatter diverted the officers from the sad implorings of mothers less fashionable than her mistress.

"Yes," said Mrs. McCloskey, "we would all rather have been burned alive than that one of these children should have suffered. In two minutes all our two thousand children had left the school. They behaved like little lions. Why, there was Fred Davis, aged ten, who was sent from Miss West's class-room to fetch a slate, and coming back, cried, 'Teacher, there's a fire in the school; but don't say anything about it.' That is the stuff of which true American men are made."

The three hoses that coiled along the roof of the lower assembly-room had in fifteen minutes subdued the flames. Chief Bates, of the Fire Department, was in command. He was of opinion that the fire was caused by a defective flue. There is no regular cellar to the building. The pipe which communicates with the steam heater runs under all the seats in the two galleries. Another theory was current that the children were in the habit of setting their lunch-papers against both the heater and the pipes, and that the grease made them liable to ignition. A skeptical trustee maintained that matches were often concealed in the scholars' clothes; but the teachers argued that the fire, when it started, was several feet from the pegs where the clothes hung. But the theory of a defective flue was most in favor.

The school was built in 1846, and is by no means calculated to inspire confidence. Two panics have already occurred there. A little girl, over-eager to clutch her prize, fell down in an epileptic fit last October, and the boys shouting "Fire!" nothing but the teacher's coolness averted disaster.

A TERRIBLE DISASTER AVERTED.—TWO THOUSAND CHILDREN RESCUED FROM A BURNING SCHOOLHOUSE.—LITTLE GIRLS STOPPING TO ASSIST THEIR CRIPPLED COMPANIONS DOWN THE STAIRCASE.

THE KING AND THE VALET.

FREDERICK WILLIAM III., late King of Prussia, who during the greater part of his life, and almost all his reign, had to struggle with adverse and deeply depressing circumstances, and in whose character gravity naturally formed a prominent feature, was yet by no means destitute of good humor, which imparted a peculiar zest to his familiar intercourse. The following authentic anecdotes may serve as specimens:

One day, as the footmen were acting out the royal table, one of them could not resist the desire to taste the bottle of excellent claret which he was intrusted to place on it, and in the persuasion that he at that particular moment ran no risk of detection, he put the bottle he was about to decant to his lips, and indulged in one or two mouthfuls of the delectable liquor.

But, as ill-luck would have it, at that very moment the saloon was entered by the Court Marshal, or Chamberlain, a man of stern rule as well as strict integrity, who thus became eye-witness of the flagitious transgression.

In his terror and confusion the culprit hastily withdrew the flask from his mouth, and in so doing spilled a considerable portion of the dark-colored contents on his snowy livery waistcoat, which thus became his incontrovertible though dumb accuser.

With a withering look the Court Marshal, or Chamberlain, announced to the convicted menial that he had forfeited his place in the royal household, from which he counseled him to withdraw as soon as possible, following up the denouncement with a well-deserved lecture, delivered in no measured terms; while, overwhelmed with shame and grief, the detected one stood before his awful superior unable to speak a word or move a limb. At this moment the king himself appeared on the scene. Having caught the last words of reprehension, and seeing the corpse-like countenance of the valet and the purple stains on his white waistcoat, his Majesty was not slow in forming a shrewd conjecture as to the real state of affairs; but, happily for the offender, the impression on the royal mind was a comical one.

Perhaps the king's countenance betrayed this, for, full of contrition, yet not wholly despairing, the criminal fell on his knees before the sovereign and begged forgiveness.

But the action had nearly defeated its purpose, for Frederick William called out in a tone of deep displeasure:

"Stand up! No man dare kneel to a fellow-creature. To God alone belongs such homage."

Springing to his feet with the speed of lightning, the unfortunate hung his head in despair, believing all was now lost. But the king's merry mood had returned, and, yielding to its impulse, he said, in his characteristic abrupt manner, as he bent a would-be schoolstory glance on the culprit:

"When thirsty again, drink *white* wine; it does not leave such telltale stains on white waistcoats; for this time, forgiveness." Adding, with a new irresistible laugh, "Must not make the Court Marshal angry again; every one must do his duty."

And with this sentence the offense was forgiven, but not so quickly forgotten; for the occurrence furnished the kind-hearted monarch with more than one hearty laugh, as he rehearsed the scene to the participator of all his joys and sorrows, the beloved Queen Louisa, in the presence of the Court Chamberlain, who readily consented to rescind officially the sentence of dismissal with which he had in just indignation visited the offense.

CATS and birds do not mind being laughed at, but dogs and horses are sensitive to ridicule. Sidney Buxton relates, in the *Animal World*, that his pony gets very cross when disparaging remarks are made upon him, and becomes furious, stamping about his stall, putting back his ears, and attempting to bite if he is openly laughed at, whereas praise greatly pleases him.